THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR   Carol Stuart

TITLE OF THESIS   CREE INDIAN FAMILY SYSTEMS

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED   MASTER of EDUCATION

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED   Fall 1984

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CREE INDIAN FAMILY SYSTEMS

by

Carol Stuart

⬡ C

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER of EDUCATION

IN

Counselling

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 1984

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled CREE INDIAN FAMILY SYSTEMS submitted by Carol Stuart in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER of EDUCATION in Counselling .

ABSTRACT

The breakdown of the Indian family in Canada is a concern to social workers, counsellors, and the Indian people themselves. In order that the professionals working with Indian families be better prepared to understand the Indian family system, this study was undertaken. The literature relative to Cree Indian family life, and the special needs of Indian families is surveyed.

A characterization of Cree Indian family lifestysle is approached from the point of view of the functional family residing in an urban setting. The study undertakes a descriptive and exploratory approach to uncovering the characteristics of the Cree Indian family system. Some implications of these family characteristics for counselling with Cree families are outlined.

Table of Contents

Chapter I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF INDIAN FAMILIES

Few people would disagree that the family is a major influence on all individuals and as well on society and culture. The original families of Canada were the Native people, the Indian and Eskimo people that populated North America long before the settlers arrived from Europe. Presently, by virtue of a series of events too complicated to even be able to trace accurately, (even if memories were objective enough to recall then accurately), there is what is often referred to as an 'Indian problem'. The Indian people have been studied, and their conditions and problems reported on many, many times.

Many explanations have been offered for the 'Indian problem'. In Canada the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has been created to meet the needs of the Indian people and alleviate the problems. Indians are the only culturally distinct group to have a specific department designed to examine and meet their needs. In 1979 approximately 1.7 per cent of the federal tax dollars were used by that department (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1980).

Once again, an aspect of the Indian people is to be examined. It is hoped though that this time the reader will gain more than an explanation of the facts, and will begin to understand the people that are studied to obtain the facts, and in particular their families. By learning about the character of the Indian family, the influences on it, and beginning to understand it, the reader may well become convinced that there is no 'Indian' problem. That is, people and families cannot be grouped into common problem areas without considering individual backgrounds. The reader will have noted that the term 'Indian' is being used. This in itself can have many definitions according to the individual. In this case the term is meant to refer to Canadian Indian people whose ancestors were the aboriginal people of North America and encompass varying tribal backgrounds.

There have been many aspects of the Indian population that have been studied and analyzed. The issues that arise when one begins to examine this culturally distinct group are many. In the following sections a brief overview of the statistical information that has been gathered is presented. Only those issues that are most directly relevant to family life have been included. The orientation that the Indian community is taking to dealing with families in difficulty is also briefly reviewed as a background to this study. There are no

1

doubt, omissions of particular areas that have implications for family life, but these sections are intended to familiarize the reader with the issues that prompted the need for this study, not to provide an extensive review of those issues.

A. The Canadian Indian Problem as Defined by Facts and Figures

There is a difficulty with presenting the statistics on Indian people. The difficulty comes, in part, with the definition of Indian. Often, statistics have been collected for status Indian people, ie. those registered with the Canadian government. At other times the statistics that refer to Indian people also include non-status and Metis people. Where possible, in this study, these differences have been specified.

During the last ten to twenty years there have been a number of changes in the demographic characteristics of the Indian population. These characteristics are also markedly different from the Canadian population in general. In the population of registered Indians, which has nearly doubled in the past 20 years, to over 300,000, 43 per cent were considered dependent in 1978 (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, [D.I.A.N.A.], 1980). That is, 43 per cent were under 15 or over 65 years of age, compared with 33 per cent for the national population. The Indian population is much younger, five per cent are over 65 years of age, compared to ten per cent in the general population. The number of Indians living off a reserve was nearly 30 per cent in 1979, and Indian communities are more physically accessible now than 20 years ago (D.I.A.N.A., 1980). The mortality rate for the Indian people is two to four times the national average for those under 65 years of age. Once the age reaches 65 years the mortality rate is close to the non-Indian population (D.I.A.N.A., 1980). Of these deaths, over 33 per cent are from accidents, violence, and poisoning, compared to nine per cent for Canada as a whole. Suicide rates in the Indian population, in the year 1977, were 130 per 100,000 population in the 15 to 24 year age range. They were 20 per 100,000 for the national population in the same age range. These statistics paint a rather violent and depressing picture, particularly for the potential of Indian youth to grow up, produce families and be a contributing part of their culture. They seem to indicate the need for more effective social and psychological services to the Indian people in order that their potential for life as a people becomes more like that of the national norm. Unfortunately statistics do not

address why the differences exist or how to go about changing the social situations represented by such statistics.

At times, Indians blame early educational practices as the source of lost cultural identity and pride. According to a recent report on Indian conditions, (D.I.A.N.A., 1980), the last 20 years have seen a number of changes in relation to cultural expression. There have been increases in Indian cultural expression in the form of pow-wows, traditional gatherings, and recognition of contemporary Indian artists. As well, 57 Indian cultural/educational centres have been funded since 1972.

In general D.I.A.N.A. (1980) believes that increases in divorce, numbers of children in care, and adoptions of Indian children indicate deteriorating family and social conditions on reserves. The birth rate has declined, but remains at about twice the national average. The size of Indian families is about five members, and is slowly approaching the national level of three and one half members. Perhaps some of the most alarming statistics are those on adoptions. In 1962 about 125 Canadian Indian children were adopted, half of those by non-Indian families. In 1977, about 585 children were adopted, 80 per cent of them by non-Indian families. Johnston (1983) terms this the 'sixties scoop'. The rate of adoption by non-Indian families increased dramatically during the 1960's and 1970's. It is likely that all those children lost their cultural heritage and were lost from their people.

> Every culture places its hopes, aspirations, traditions and eventually it's community responsibilities with it's children. (Sullivan, 1983, p.80)

According to Johnston (1983), of all the children in Canada, 1979-80 statistics indicate that two per cent are status Indian children. Of these status Indian children 4.6 per cent of them are under the care of government authorities and likely removed from their families. When one considers all the children in Canada, .96 per cent of them were in the care of child welfare authorities in 1980. The Indian children are over represented in the child welfare system relative to their representation in the national population. Of all status Indian children in Canada 28.4 per cent were living off a reserve in 1979. All these figures represent status Indian children only and do not account for Metis or non-status children.

The statistics indicate that for status Indian children in Canada a disproportionate number have been removed from their families or placed under protective care. Why they have been removed is not indicated by the statistics. Neither do the statistics specify why such a high percentage of children live off a reserve, or whether they are with their

families when off the reserve. The statistics for all status Indians living off a reserve would tend to support the idea that there are a fair number of families, not just children, living off the reserves.

The breakdown of these statistics varies by province. The western provinces and the territories have a much higher proportion of the Native population, and a correspondingly higher proportion of Native children in care. Alberta Social Services and Community Health provide statistics for all Native children in their care, broken down into status, non-status, Metis, and Inuit children. (Johnston, 1983). For 1981, these indicate that Native children in the care of child welfare authorities represent 41.6 per cent of all children requiring such care. There is no indication of the overall representation of Native children in the province but if the figures for status Indian children are examined, in 1979-80 2.9 per cent of all children in the province of Alberta were status Indian. In 1980, 21.7 per cent of all children in the care of the authorities were status Indian. The figures are grossly disproportionate.

Often when children are removed from their own families the placement of choice is a foster family, a recognition of the importance of family life to the child. In Alberta, in 1981, 78.3 per cent of all Native foster children were placed in non-Native foster homes (Johnston, 1983). The question arises; are Native and non-Native homes or family life similar enough to justify these placements? As Sullivan (1983) states:

> To the extent that Indian children are removed and cultural ties with Native origins are devalued or severed, the child welfare system is an agent of cultural imperialism. There are good arguments that other parts of the acculturation process have robbed Indian families of some of their parenting skills and eroded the traditional value base of much of Indian child rearing practice. (p. 80)

Are Indian children being removed from their families for legitimate reasons? Who is making the judgement of whether or not the family lifestyle is endangering to the child? The statistics seem to imply that many more Indian families are judged unhealthy than families in the general population. Perhaps Indian children have just become more susceptable to intervention by the child welfare system.

B. The Return to Taking Care of Their Own

The Indian people themselves have decided that the situation requires that they do something to re-affirm their own community and family strength and provide for their culture to continue. Politically they are insisting on their rights as the original people of Canada. Economically they are developing means by which to support themselves. Socially they are insisting on the right to take care of their own children, as well as to provide other services to their own people. They are taking action in a variety of ways.

In British Columbia the Spallumcheen band wrote a by-law that gave them the power to insist that all the children who had been removed from their reserve be returned. They proceded to develop their own child welfare system and services on the reserve. Because reserves are accountable to the federal government who approved the Spallumcheen by-law presumably it supercedes the provincial child welfare statute. The bylaw, which is supported by the province has not yet been tested in court.

In Manitoba the Dakota-Ojibway Child and Family Services has a tri-partite agreement with the federal and provincial governments to design and administer all child welfare services to eight bands. They operate as an Indian controlled and Indian staffed Children's Aid Society. Other bands can easily be included in the agreement, and there are plans to do so in the future. Each government's level of duty and reponsibility is clearly detailed in the agreement.

In Alberta, a similar tri-partite agreement was signed in June 1983 with the Lesser Slave Lake Tribal Council to provide child welfare services to ten bands in northern Alberta. Alberta Social Services and Community Health is negotiating with other bands to follow a similar agreement. Several bands in central Alberta are setting up child welfare services on their reserves without the involvement of the provincial government, following the model of the Spallumcheen band.

This movement to care for their own children is based in the experience of the Indian people that many of those children that have been removed from their families have suffered considerably. "The experience has increased their sense of alienation and the degree of confusion about their personal and cultural identity." (Johnston, 1983, p.123). Indian family life has been weakened, and thus the Indian way of life has been damaged. The Indian people are now seeking to restore some of that way of life.

C. Summary and Directions

The statistics presented can be alarming. Certainly they represent the realities of a situation that have critical implications for family life. The Indian people are beginning to develop their own services for families, primarily on reserves. The statistics indicate that nearly one third of all status Indians live off the reserves, and that beyond these people there are non-status and Metis people, all of whom are ineligible for the services on reserves, or too far away to benefit from them. There are additional impacts on families created by leaving the reserve that should also be considered. It is toward a better understanding of this population of Indian peoples that this study is aimed.

The literature available on Indian family systems is almost non-existant and tends to be of an impressionistic, subjective nature. There is a great need for systematic, empirical research into the characteristics of the Indian family. This study begins that process by identifying some of the unique similarities and differences among individuals of Cree origin. From this study it should be possible to identify what areas it will be important to explore further in order to better understand Indian family systems.

It seems that effective child welfare services and social services have not been available for the Indian people. It is hoped that by exploring the Indian family lifestyle, and describing it from their perspective, professionals working with Indian families will better understand the needs of the families they are serving, and be more effective in providing services.

Under the definitions of Native or Indian come many tribes and classifications of individuals. There are differences among different tribes of Indian people, just as there are differences among people of European background. In central and northern Alberta many of the Indian people come from the Plains Cree. It is specifically this group of Indian people that has been addressed in this study. Unfortunately tribal classifications are not often recognized as distinct, so some consideration has been given to the general terms Native and Indian in reviewing the available literature.

An understanding of what is normal and functional in family lifestyle is a basis from which professionals should be working with families. It seems that one implication of the alarming statistics presented earlier could be that professionals do not have such a base for serving the Indian family. There will of course be a range of normality in family

functioning. The generalizability of the results of this study, which focuses on Cree Indian families, may be limited.

Chapter II begins by briefly reviewing the concepts of family functioning and models that have been developed by those researching and teaching others about families. It is from just such a base of knowledge that many of those working with Indian families have assessed family functioning. This is followed by a review of the literature on the Indian people, particularly in reference to their family life style and the implications of culture and values for the family. A review of the limited literature on counselling Indian people is also included.

Chapter III outlines the methodology used for this research and the rationale behind that methodology. Support for the methodology is drawn from writings on research in the human sciences, research in family functionality and research done with Indian people in a variety of areas.

Chapter IV presents the results of this study. It characterizes the similarities and differences in the family life style of the Cree Indian people interviewed for this study. The results are grouped into nine dimensions. Seven of the dimensions directly address the question of what is a 'normal' Cree Indian family and how do they function. The other areas addressed include the values of the Cree Indian culture, and counselling with Cree Indian people.

Chapter V draws some implications for working with Cree Indian people based on the results of this study. Some suggestions for further research are presented in the hope of alleviating the alarming statistics presented in this chapter.

Chapter II

FAMILY SYSTEMS AND INDIAN FAMILIES: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

When reviewing the literature in regards to the Cree people, very little can be found specifying the Cree tribe. Thus it is necessary to review the literature encompassing the broader classification of 'North American Indian'. Most literature reviewed attributes common characteristics to all Native people. This author and several others, (Red Horse, 1980; Medicine, 1981), believe it is essential to distinguish among tribes. Where possible, in the following review that distinction will be made.

A. A Definition of Family is Attempted

From a Family Systems Perspective

Much of the theory and research on families has been generated from an examination of dysfunctional families. Just as the statistics presented previously focus on defining the Indian problem, it seems easier to examine what is 'abnormal' rather than what is 'normal' in terms of characterizing a family. Such examinations often involve the perceptions of the individual that is defining the problem or abnormality. In terms of defining normal Indian families this seems to have posed a problem as was evident earlier from the statistics on the number of children having been removed from their families.

A family is commonly held to be a social unit. The extent of inclusion or exclusion of family members and the behavioral norms and implications of being a member of that social unit vary according to the source consulted. In the helping professions a recent focus has been on defining the family as a system. Hanson and L'Abate (1982) provide a brief summary of the systems focus.

Overall a systems approach views the family as a set of interrelated parts. There is some overlap among the parts and a relative permeability to the boundries of the set. There are a number of qualities which define this set as a family. Members of a family come and go to some extent. There is a relative flexibility of the parts in terms of their ability to work together. Members of the family perform specific functions or roles as agreed upon by themselves and other members within the family. Because the members of a family are not isolated but are in constant interaction there is a quality of membership

that acknowledges that together they are more than the sum of each of them individually.

Prior to addressing the question of what is a normal Cree Indian family, it is worthwhile to examine some of the various attempts to define a normal or functional family in the field of family therapy. Normal could be defined as the statistical average. Such a definition requires a precise definition of the population used to determine the statistic. It is difficult to use the statistical definition because of the variability of a large number of factors such as socio-economic class, culture, age, developmental stage, and so on.

A review by Hanson and L'Abate (1982) on the classification of functional families reveals several factors that are important to family functioning dependent upon the perspective of the researcher.

Effective problem-solving behavior is one factor identified (David, 1978 in Hanson and L'Abate, 1982). A functional family is aware of needing to make choices, able to recognize alternatives, and able to effectively make a choice based on an appraisal of costs and consequences.

Another factor identified is the interactional boundaries between family members (Beaver, 1979 in Hanson and L'Abate, 1982). This is defined as the manner in which family members handle space and time. The healthy family struggles for intimacy. This means that members are open and direct, respectful of each others views, spontaneous, and possess qualities unique to themselves. Each member is seen as capable of contributing but children have less power. Emotional expression is allowed. The family has values which are identifiable and shared.

Power is another factor important to family functioning (Kantor and Lehr, 1975 in Hanson and L'Abate, 1982). In an open family system power is shared between the parents and used persuasively rather than coercively in the decision making process.

Other factors considered important to healthy family function are identity, how change is handled, information processing, and role structure (Barnhill, 1979 in Hanson and L'Abate, 1982). The functional family allows independence and clear individual identities while encouraging intimacy between members. The family is adjustable, resilient, and changeable but maintains a definable structure and rules of interaction. Perceptions of events are shared and clear, often as a result of an effective exchange of information.

Roles are definable and mutually negotiated, and there are generational differences.

While these dimensions are often held to be important, their relative importance and means of assessment are often disputed by the theorists. The McMaster model of family functioning, (Epstein, Bishop, Levin, 1978), does not focus on any one dimension but rather identifies six different dimensions much like those discussed above. The model has not yet generated any assessment tools but is specific in terms of defining the skills involved in functional families and the continuum of dysfunctional through functional. They make no statement regarding the relative importance of any one dimension or the specific interaction of the dimensions. This aspect of their model makes it useful in application to the exploratory study of Cree Indian families.

Briefly defined and summarized the six dimensions to the McMaster Model are:

1.   The problem solving dimension is defined as the family's ability to solve issues which threaten the integrity and function of the family. The solution of the problem means that effective family functioning is maintained. Issues may be instrumental and mechanical or they may be affective. Problem-solving requires seven steps beginning with an identification of the problem. The problem is communicated to appropriate resources and alternative solutions are developed. A decision is made regarding which action to take and then that action is carried out. The action is monitored and finally the success of the action is evaluated. Functional families go through all seven steps.

2.   The communication dimension is defined as how the members of the family exchange information verbally. Again there are instrumental and affective communications. Communication can be assessed along two dimensions, clarity of content and directness, or whether the message goes to whom it should. Clear and direct communication is postulated as the most healthy.

3.   Family roles are defined as the repeated patterns of behavior by which members fullfil family functions. These functions may be instrumental or affective. These two areas of function can each be divided into necessary and 'other' functions. Roles are allocated to various members. This allocation should be appropriate and shared. Allocation may be carried out implicitly or explicitly. Roles also involve accountability, or the process by which a member is held responsible for fullfiling

the allocated function.

4.   The dimension of affective responsiveness is defined as the pattern by which the family responds to a variety of stimuli with appropriate quality and quantity of feelings. Epstein et al. (1978) note the importance of cultural variation in this area. Functional families would display a broader range of responses appropriate to a variety of situations.

5.   Affective involvement is defined as the extent to which members are interested in and value the interests and activities of other members. The spectrum of involvement covers six possibilities; lack of involvement, involvement based on interest but devoid of feelings, involvement based on self-centered feelings and interest, empathic involvement, over-involvement, and involvement whereby the interests and feelings of two or more members are indistinguishable. Empathic involvement is postulated as the most functional level.

6.   The last dimension is that of behavioral control. It is defined as the patterns of response that the family develops in three different situations. These three different areas are; physically dangerous situations, situations where members meet and/or express a variety of psychobiological needs and drives, and situations involving socializing behavior of family members both inside and outside the family context. The model classifies four styles of behavior control; rigid, flexible, laissez-faire, and chaotic. These styles are characterized by the standard applied and the latitude allowed in the control of members' behavior. Flexible control, whereby reasonable standards are applied, accounting for context, is postulated as the most functional, chaotic control is the least functional.

The McMaster model seems to encompass many of the factors mentioned in the review previously covered. It is also quite detailed and the concepts seem well defined. It has not been used to develop any sort of an assessment tool and thus the postulates of functionality are not confirmed by research. Similar concepts to those addressed in the McMaster model have been assessed by some other researchers, using their own theoretical basis and assessment tools.

Olson, Sprenkle and Russel (1980) have developed a two dimensional model of family functioning. The dimensions are based on a review of the literature which indicated

that all concepts addressed by other theorists could be reduced to fitting into these two dimensions. They also postulate a third dimension which facilitates movement on the other two dimensions. This is a communication dimension, defined as how family members exchange information. In a national survey of a self-report instrument developed to assess communication, they looked at the extent of openness and the degree of information exchange, and the problems that occur in family communication. The results tend to support the McMaster model in that, open communication with few problems is the norm.

The model developed by Olson, Sprenkle and Russel is called the Circumplex model of family functioning. The two major dimensions of the model are; cohesion, defined as the emotional bonding that family members experience; and adaptability, defined as the ability of the family system to change it's power structure, roles and relationship rules in response to stress. Cohesion is similar to the McMaster model dimensions of affective involvement and problem-solving. Adaptability involves the areas of family roles, affective responsiveness and behavioral control. From the Circumplex model an assessment tool was developed.

A national survey (n=2082) based on this assessment tool indicated that on the adaptability dimension, both flexible and structured families were fairly equally represented in the population, at about one third each. This seems consistent with the postulates of the MciMaster model, that flexible control families are most functional and that family roles should be definable.

On the Cohesion dimension a split was also evident between connected and seperated types of families, each type of family representing about one third of the population. This too supports the postulates of the McMaster model that empathic involvement is functional, and an ability to change is essential, but too much change is dysfunctional.

There is some empirical support for the importance of the dimensions of family functionality as outlined by a variety of theorists and researchers. As Hanson and L'Abate note though, the "lack of empirical and/ or clinical verfication or consensus from different sources, makes them speculative and suggestive at best." (1982, p. 41) Regardless of how well supported they are by research, the dimensions just outlined are those considered important by researchers working in the area of family systems. An important

question is whether these concepts are applicable and / or important to Indian family systems.

From an Indian Perspective

The Native people have a different style of conceptualizing or symbolizing the concepts they use in their languages, and this effects their use of the English language. Tafoya (1982) calls this the Standard Native American (SNA) world view and says it is in conflict with the Standard Average European (SAE) world view. Tafoya uses the example of therapists defining a family system, usually called extended, and the misconceptions that it may lead to. The SAE world view has the nuclear family as central, and significant others bound together according to the physical proximity or degree of blood relationship to mother and father.

The SNA world view on the other hand centralizes the children, both siblings, and cousins. In Cree, as in many Native languages, the terms for brother and sister may also be used for cousins. As well term distinctions are different according to the person's age in relation to the speaker, sex, and with cousins, cross or parallel cousin relationships. The Grandparent roles include grand aunts and uncles, and these people surround the children and are most significant to their lives. Parent roles may include those who are brothers and sisters of parents, and they surround their children and the grandparent generation.

Medicine (1981) also speaks of the differing concept of a family in the Native orientation. She states that the nuclear family model has been imposed on Native peoples as a means of civilizing them, to obliterate their cultural heritages. The importance of the family system as conceived of by Native people is seen in the statement;

> The fact that family structures have not been completely recast in a White mold, speaks to the survival strengths of many domestic units. Due to ecological factors,...Native American Kinship units which are seen qualitatively as familial units have remained functional for group survival. The very encapsulation from the dominant society has allowed a native version of a conjugal or domestic unit to persist over time.(Medicine, 1981, p. 21)

Another way of viewing the family is seen in the implications of marriage which Medicine says "establishes a relationship in which an alliance between two kinship groups is recognized by the community".(1981,p. 18) This establishes a broad support network for all members of the newly formed kin network.

When considering the Native family then, one must adopt a different view and include within the concept of the family, a social unit including, but not limited to all kin of the individual being referenced. It is a unit in which the children are of central importance, and strong bonds and obligations are inherent to all family members. It also implies a particular value orientation, and means of viewing the world which will be looked at in later sections.

B. Anthropological Literature on the Cree Family

Information specific to the Cree people is found in the anthropological literature, and is historical in nature. Studies on the validity of this information today are not available. Mandlebaum (1979) and Fine Day (1973) wrote of the family relationships of the Plains Cree tribe in the early 1900's. Meyer(1971) writes of the Red Earth Cree of Manitoba and their historical practices. What follows describes family life two or three generations ago, and to the extent that traditions and lifestyle are passed on may be valid today.

Band membership was based on kinship or marriage into the band. The stable nucleus of the band were all close relatives of the chief (Mandlebaum, 1979). Marriages were arranged. A potential husband was judged by the character of his father. The usual process was that the father of either the boy or the girl gave gifts to the father of the other. A tipi was pitched by the girl's parents near the boy's people, for the new couple. The girl would offer a pair of moccasins she had made to the boy. If he accepted an old man would perform a brief ceremony and they would live together (Fine Day, 1973). The boy or girl might also ask the parents to make the arrangements (Mandlebaum, 1979). If there was no parental consent the youths would run off and settle in another band for several years. When they returned if the parents saw them to be settled, then everything would be fine (Fine Day, 1973).

One's relationship to another individual dictated the form of interaction that was adopted with that person. Joking relationships existed between a man's brothers and his wife's sisters. This joking was often of a sexual nature (Mandlebaum, 1979; Fine Day, 1973). Parent-in-law avoidance was strictly practiced (Meyer, 1971; Mandlebaum, 1979). A man could never give enough gifts to his parents-in-law and his brothers-in-law. These gifts were generally horses (Fine Day, 1973). A special relationship existed between

children and grandparents, particularly during the teen years (Meyer, 1971). This relationship was also of a joking nature, though not sexual (Mandlebaum, 1979). Women were considered subordinate and sexually accessible if their husband was absent. The woman's parents might live with her if her husband was away (Meyer, 1971). It was common to adopt an individual who had lost a close relative, to replace their loss. Gifts were given to recognize the new relationship (Mandlebaum, 1979).

Childhood was a comparatively short time, with responsibility attached, but with a good deal of freedom too. Toddlers were allowed to wander, under their sister's care. By 6 or 7 years girls might be minding toddlers. By age 9 girls would likely be caring for a child in a cradleboard. By 13 or 14 they were good cooks. Boys were responsible for live stock, and joined in fishing and hunting expeditions to learn those skills. By age 16 or 17, both boys and girls were taking part in adult social activities and were considered marriageable (Meyer, 1971). Brothers and sisters did not speak to each other after the age of 10. The girls would tend to their brother's needs, (mocassins, food) (Mandlebaum, 1979). Rituals were attached to the time of puberty. Girls, at the onset of menstruation were isolated, in the care of an old woman, perhaps grandmother. Boys sought a teacher and began their vision quest (Mandlebaum, 1979).

C. Historical Influences on the Family

The family life and customs just described were already under the influence of European-North American culture when those studies were done. To put the present day descriptions of Native family life into perspective, it is necessary to consider the influences that the European settlers had on the Indian people. As a result of contact with another culture the Cree culture has been changed.

Price states, "in countless ways the Europeans impressed their particular social system on Indians." (1978, p. 83) He cites the Indian Act as destructive of the Indian social structure, because it assumes that heads of households should be male, wives dependent, families nuclear, and inheritance is patrilineal. Marriage became regulated by law instead of the mutual agreement of two kin groups. Indian politics which had involved consensus of all, (Price, 1978) and a leader who was not elected but rather earned the position through deeds, bravery, and prestige was changed. Chief had been a position of honour held for

life. The European system of democracy was imposed, consenses of all became unnecessary as leaders were appointed or elected.

The Europeans believed that the Indians needed to be civilized. Schooling was felt to be an appropriate means. Kirkness (1981) writes of the system of education for Indian people and the profound effect it had. The churches were given the task of education. They began with day schools on reserves, but decided that totally removing the child would serve as a better means of civilizing him. To this end they established the residential schools. Some of the schools are still in operation today. The emphasis in church run schools was on the dominant culture. Children were punished for speaking their language. They went home for only two weeks of the entire year. Children were isolated from the most important vehicles of culture and values, their language, family and community. The result of the residential schools was disastrous. Children were raised without parental role models, with values and teachings that were in basic conflict with the first five years of their lives. The adults that graduated from these schools lacked self-identity and knowledge of how to raise their own children. Even today's policy of integration of Native children in day schools, fails to recognize the importance of their culture and how different their early learning experiences are (Nagler, 1975). School values are completely different from the child's early experience. Schools have an authoritarian style, demand compliance, and treat children differentially (Couture, 1971).

Nagler (1975) discusses the many aspects of European influence on the Native people. The free roaming, hunting economy of the Native people was at odds with the technological, manufacturing economy of the Europeans. Placing the Native people on reserves served to isolate them as different, and effectively prevented them from joining together as a whole. The Indians were exposed to new diseases which they could not treat. They were introduced to alcohol, but were not legally allowed to consume alcohol until 1969. All these influences had implications for family life because they imposed changes on the Indian society. The family is the basis of community life and society.

D. Values of the Indian People

'White middle class' values may be considered to be the dominant value system in Canada and the United States. They are no doubt derived from the European influence of the early settlers of North America. There are some marked differences between Indian and 'white' value systems that have implications for examining the family, and for the counselling situation.

'Values' have been defined as a means of identifying a generalized set of goal-oriented expectations. They are based on a specific concept inherent within the person's frame of reference. They define what ends or what means to an end are desirable (Trimble, 1976). Many authors have attempted to delineate what values distinguish Indian people from non-Indians. Differences have been outlined but they do not take into account tribal differences, or differences between reserve and urban dwellers. The authors reviewed here generalize by stating that they write of Indian values, rather than any specific tribe. Trimble (1976) reports one general list, and lists that are specific to the Pueblo and Hopi Indians. He suggests some universal patterns of behavior exist, for which persons must find solutions, and the solutions are manifested in values.

Based on the authors reviewed, a summary of Indian values is presented here. These values reflect what are typically believed to be 'Indian' in the literature. Often these values are presented in a manner that contrasts them to 'white' values. This author has chosen to let the reader draw his own contrasts.

Present Oriented Time Frame

The Indian does not dwell on the future but rather enjoys life in the present. Time is always here, we only need do what is needed for now, and that requires no particular schedule. One flows with the present. There is always time to get things done, even if it is not done today. (Nagler, 1976; Pelletier, 1971; Trimble, 1976;)

Generosity and Sharing

Being generous and sharing all that you have generates respect from the community. One receives in order that one may give. One lives within oneself, but not for oneself. One can be wealthy only in one's appreciation of the quality of life. Generosity and sharing foster the continuation of the community. (McClain, 1977;

Poole, 1971; Spence, 1973; Trimble, 1976)

Respect for the aged

Because of their knowledge of the world and wisdom gained with their years old people are given much respect. They are the teachers for the young. They, in turn for respect, pray for, and be sure that the spirits watch over the young. (Daniels, 1970; Trimble, 1976;)

Co-operation and Sharing

The Indian focuses on co-operation and sharing with others. A system of free mutual aid is obligatory. This serves to perpetuate the group. This focus extends to the world around, in that the Indian is an ecological participant, not an economic competitor. (Couture, 1971; Daniels, 1970; Nagler, 1976; Poole, 1971; Spence, 1973; Trimble, 1976)

Harmony with Nature

The individual is only a part of the whole of nature, and must flow with nature. He has no right to try and change nature. The spirits must be consulted whenever nature is effected by a human. The earth is owned by the great spirit and manages itself; it posseses life. (Daniels, 1970; McClain, 1977; Pelletier, 1971; Poole, 1971; Trimble, 1976)

Spiritualism

Spiritualism pervades all aspects of Indian life. The central meaning of life was in the vision quest. Spiritualism is a total way of life that confirms and enhances a sense of personal worth and respect for others. (Daniels, 1970; McClain, 1977; Poole, 1971;)

Wholeness

Indian people start with the whole and examine every part in relationship to the whole. Answers are found within oneself and are related to the natural order that the self is a part of. For example, group consensus is essential to the running of a community. A disagreement within the community causes the majority to look at and question themselves and what they are saying. (Pelletier, 1971; Spence, 1973)

Mutual Respect

Indian people are born guilt free with no conscience or standards of conduct and responsibility. The latter are set by a tradition of dignity, and mutual respect. If an individual's conduct falls below standards, he has lost face and his status within the community becomes less. (Trimble, 1976)

These values are rooted in the Indian people's culture which has been confronted by and conflicts with the dominant culture, based in European values. The importance of being aware of the Indian culture and knowlegable of its values is stated by Nagler:

> While material aspects of a culture can undergo change without difficulty, family, kinship and other social institutions are of a more persistent nature and this aspect of the way of life, which has been labelled as a core culture, implicit values, cultural orientations, and personality type are still more persistant. (1976, p.13)

and by Couture:

> Culture is normative, a way of life, a characteristic, group manner of reponding to the needs of a group. This adaptivity is something which is transmitted, which can and does change, and which can be improved upon, or which can become inhibited. (1972, p.44)

Certain aspects of the culture are retained and passed on perhaps with modifications, through the generations. These aspects, such as values, family characteristics, and personality characteristics are the aspects that the counsellor needs to be aware of in their interaction with the Native people.

E. Family Characteristics in Indian Families Today

The literature, again characterizes 'Native people' when talking about the family, rather than distinguishing among tribes. Information is available on tribes of Mexico and the southern United States, and some on Eastern Canada, but none on the Cree people. Before examining the more general writing on 'Natives' it might be worthwhile to look at some of the literature on specific tribes, bearing in mind that there are differences between tribes.

Family Relationships in Other Tribes

Gibson (1972) writes of the coastal tribes of British Columbia, and his experience as a probation officer. He discusses childrearing; children are brought up as individuals with obligations to the family. There is no interference in their personal and private lives, they are expected to follow the example of their parents and grandparents. One must not instruct them explicitly. The Grandparent's home is a refuge for all the family. children were accepted into alternative families, without question and they were provided for. Few 'white' foster homes were acceptable because they made assumptions that the child shared their competitive goals, and wanted to be like them.

Shavinsky (1980) writes of the Hare society. He also notes the high value placed on individual autonomy and lack of interference in other's business. He states that this fosters resourcefulness but security is a product of group membership to ensure survival. Shavinsky outlines several rules of relationships between family members. There is restraint and deference between spouses as well as between parent and child. Same sexed siblings are very supportive of each other. Grandparents have warm, supportive relationships with their grandchildren. Communication rules indicate that hostility be repressed or displaced, since one must be in complete control. Shavinsky's study was specifically related to drinking patterns, and he states that drinking releases self-control and one is therefore not responsible for behavior. Nagler (1976) provides a similar rational for alcohol consumption and adds that alcohol is felt to provide unusual powers, visions and dreams. These are valued experiences.

Dunning (1971) examined the Northern Ojibwa changes in family marriage patterns, with the hypothesis that they are moving more toward the nuclear family prototype. He found that this was not so. Certain relationship rules exist for family member interaction, based on the system of parallel and cross-cousin relationships, as defined in anthropology. These relationship rules are the same as those noted by Mandlebaum (1979) for the Cree bands he studied in the early 1900's. The rules of family interaction seem to have persisted across tribes and through time.

The Indian Family System: Defined in General Terms

Most of the literature available characterizes Native Americans. Whether the information is applicable to Cree Indians, and whether the characteristics of other tribes noted above are applicable is of course an important question. This must be kept in mind when considering the literature reviewed.

Red Horse (1980) defines an American Indian Family system as one which extends laterally into several households and which has an additional bonding feature of the incorporation of non-kin as family through both formal and informal processes. Van Dyke (1982) similarly says that households may not be bounded by four walls, and kinship patterns may be a reflection of social, not biological relationships. That is, the term of relationship that an individual uses toward another defines the relationship, the blood relationship does not necessarily dictate the term of address an individual uses. Red Horse further adds that this system of lateral extension may cross state boundries and exists within urban settings as well.

Red Horse presents a developmental model of the Indian family, and contrasts it with the nuclear family developmental model. The Indian family system fosters interdependence, stressing family involvement, approval and pride, and building self-reliance (Red Horse, 1980; Sullivan, 1983).

Tafoya (1982) presents a different model of the family system. The same implications for interdependence and family involvement can be seen with Tafoya's model. Goodluck (1980) further supports these models of the extended family, stating that family members, clan members, and relatives are not always related by blood but rather by tribal association, proximity and friendship; particularly in an urban setting.

The Hawthorne Report (1968) assessed many aspects of Native life and a portion of it included an assessment of family life. In speaking of the psychological environment within the family, the report notes the child's autonomy and independence, adding that this provides limited stimulation and feedback from adults. The report states "little time is spent on teaching the child... some time may be spent in encouraging the child to imitate father or mother..."(1968, p. 112). The report states routines are often non-existent, meals are served on demand and life is adult-centered and the child is fitted in. Discipline is protective and loose, behavioral expectations are minimal, the child is ridiculed if he fails.

In another section of the report it is stated that children are expected to participate in economic routines and be involved in care tasks, a behavioral expectation not commonly found in 'White' families. These statements appear to be in contradiction to what the previous writers stated. They could though be viewed in the context of 'White' culture as negative but when placed in the context of 'Indian' culture they may be seen as positive.

Roles of System Members

The definitions of the Native family system given above have some implications for the roles assigned to family members, the rules of the household (extended over several actual houses), and the communication between family members. The roles of family members have been conceptualized as aligning themselves on a continuum of caring. Caring denotes cultural and spiritual maintainance as well as physical and emotional needs satisfaction (Red Horse, 1980). Red Horse defines three life phases; being cared for, preparing to care for, and assuming care for. These are not necessarily defined according to age. These life phases can also be seen in Tafoya's model, the outer circle preparing to care for what will be the inner circle in the next generation.

The child's role is to be cared for. Naming ceremonies are one means of setting up a supportive network for children. Naming a child for another obligates that individual to play an important role in the child's life (Red Horse, 1980). Children learn by modelling and the namesake is an important role model (Sullivan, 1983). Children are at the centre of a families activities, they are included in everything and always considered in planning (Burgess, 1980). They are considered a gift of the creator, given special attention by the community, and they form the strongest bond of family life.

Adolesence and adulthood, even if one has a child, are considered a preparatory phase for caring, a period of time when ones role is to become self-reliant with increasing family interdependence (Red Horse, 1980). It is a supervisory role, often providing for the physical care of the child. This role is begun about the age of 13 or 14 and continued often until the individual becomes a grandparent. This preparatory role may extend to caring for younger siblings (and cousins), and will include children of the individual's own siblings, particularly in the event of a death (Goodluck, 1980).

The grandparent role extends to all members of the community. Elders are highly respected and provide a continuity of world view and wisdom gained from experience. They are responsible for transmitting their wisdom, and they provide for meeting the cultural and spiritual needs of the children, and adults of the community (Red Horse, 1980). Tafoya (1982) defines the grandparent role as one of caregiver and provider of training and discipline. Teaching may not occur by telling but rather by providing experiences that will teach. In this way value orientations and the Indian way of life are transmitted. "Indians are taught that their life force carries the spirits of their ancestors, and this tradition is passed through the elders" (Red Horse, 1980, p.491). Burgess (1980) deliniates the grandparent role as one of a teacher who is highly respected. Age is considered a gift, one has pleased the creator, and this deserves respect. When elders give advice and counsel that time is not interfered with as a sign of respect.

Rules of the Family System

Within the extended family structure and roles deliniated for Indian families certain rules of behavior and interaction between generations have evolved. Mandlebaum (1979) outlines some particular rules for interaction in Cree families, that were present at the beginning of the century. These have been discussed previously. Other authors discuss rules in relation to the 'Native family' of the present. Little distinction has been made among tribes.

Self-control is instilled in children at an early age. Sullivan (1983) sees the use of a cradleboard and restricted movement as being one method of instilling self-control. Stories are used as indirect teaching experiences, serving to decrease anger and aggression because the lessons are not frustrating or forced on the child (Pelletier, 1971). One does not express to others what might cause them or yourself shame is an important rule which children learn early in life.

It is felt that children learn without being told. The answer will come to those that observe and wait for it. In this manner then the answer belongs to the individual and is possessed by him or her (Pelletier, 1971; Tafoya, 1982;). This style of learning is related to the autonomy given to children from an early age. It is felt that the child will aquire all the necessary knowlege through experience. The effect of this upbringing is to foster a

close trust and reliance on others by the Indian child (Couture, 1972). There is no fear of punishment for a mistake, children learn from their mistakes. Tafoya (1982) explains, in relation to the Athabaskan people that children are rarely told not to do something because that would place the adult in the spectator role (paying attention to the child), and thus in a subordinate position to the child. The child should be watching and learning from the adult.

Discipline does not involve punishment, but rather the use of warnings, withdrawal of food or attention and the use of scolding or shaming (Sullivan, 1983). Controls placed on the child are based on warnings and shame rather than authoritarian direction and the creation of guilt. Failure is also interpreted as shameful. This has implications in the school system, leading to withdrawal and an aversion to testing (Couture, 1971). Embarrasment is a common disciplinary tool (Burgess, 1980). Praise is not handed out for something that is expected or required of the child.

Relatives frequently fill empty spaces, older sisters and aunts may supervise and provide for the needs of the child (Burgess, 1980). This provides for a feeling of closeness, caring, and sociability that is protective, resouceful and dependable (Goodluck, 1980). Meals are taken together, this often extends between several houses. Eating together and sharing food is tremendously important (Pelletier, 1971). Respect is taught by example as well as verbally, and is paid to people, animals, objects, beauty and nature. Everything must be respected (Burgess, 1980).

Communication Patterns in the Family

The forms of communication in Native families are often misunderstood. Words often have less signifigance than actions or expression. The speed of talk and loudness may have more signifigance than the word. Silence is also an important communicator (Spence, 1973). Silence indicates respect, politeness, and time to prepare for speaking. Sullivan (1983) indicates that infrequent verbal interaction is common in Native people, and that parents offer little help or comment to their children, giving the impression that they do not communicate much. Such an impression seems to be created because communication is not presented verbally, and meanings are often implicit.

Language is only one form that communication may take. Van Dyke (1977) states that a Native community will maintain a different or traditional family structure if their

mother language is spoken in the course of daily life. Language implies a developed set of concepts, a way of categorizing and thinking (Sealy, 1973). In the Cree language, certain rules of syntax may have implication for communication. There is no gender definition, rather nouns are animate or inanimate. Third person pronouns are the same for male and female. Word order is relatively unimportant, but word form is critical. Endings and beginnings give meaning to words.

F. Counseling with Indian People

Poole (1971) makes two statements which seem to have vast implications not only for the growth of Native society and culture, but also for the counselling process with Native people.

> It is of utmost importance, not only to Indians but also to whites, that every Indian feel and know himself to be a member of an ancient and noble American race; ...It is important that every Indian though proud of his status as a Canadian or American citizen should first hold up his head and be proud of his Indian blood. (1971, p.47)

> The white community must look for and discover something to admire and desire in the Indian way and the Indian as a human being--just as it is presently assumed that the Indian ought to be attracted to the white culture and ought to find something to aspire to in the white human being. (1971, p.37)

So often is it assumed that the 'white middle class' way is the best, that we do not even realize the assumption is being made. Effective counsellors should be aware of their own values and biases and seek to appreciate their client's values and recognize them as worthwhile.

La Frambroise (1980) surveyed Indian students in Oklahoma to determine their perceptions of important attributes and information that counsellors should possess when counselling Indian people. No difference was found between Indian and non-Indian respondents in terms of counsellor attributes. The most important attribute was that the individual must be someone the student trusts. Additional important attributes were the willingness to help with a decision about a problem and being willing to leave the office to meet. The Indian students placed importance upon the counsellor knowing practical information (filling out forms, opportunities for Indian people) rather than personal, culturally oriented understandings. The study concludes that the communication style used to establish trust is vital and that a neo-Rogerian approach is counter productive. Trimble (1976) supports this contention about the importance of communication style in the

counselling relationship, and for mutual understanding. Trimble addresses the importance of values and being able to discern the client's world view, (in contrast to La Frombroise finding that the practical information is more important).

Edwards and Edwards (1980) address the development of a relationship and trust between the individual and the helper, when the individual is Indian. They suggest the helper give the relationship plenty of time to develop, that the expertise and committment of the helper will be individually and collectively assessed first. The helper must be able to feel comfortable in long periods of silence, understand the client without detailed explanations of problems or feelings, and not expect introspection or self-evaluation. Edwards and Edwards suggest that solving practical problems is helpful in building a relationship.

Trimble (1976) additionally suggests that there are value differences between Indians as well as between Indians and non-Indians and the counsellor must take care not to get caught in placing such import on discovering or interpreting the cultural differences that the problem is lost. It is important to remember that depending upon a number of factors Indian people may be more or less than the counsellors expectations of 'Indian'.

Nagler (1976) identifies 3 subgroups among urban Indian populations. These are:

1. Those who hold Native heritage to be of great importance. These are the leaders of Indian groups.

2. Those who are ambivalent. These people may be involved in cultural activities but are selective about which activities.

3. Those who reject the Native culture. These people live with the non-Indian culture and values.

If such a classification is correct it might be important to know the individual's frame of reference in the counselling situation. Red Horse (1980) also notes the importance of respecting tribal and situational variations among Indian family systems. He does however maintain that many cultural features do remain constant, such as family structure, relational bonding, and Indian preferences in social behavior.

Literature in regards to working with Indian families, typically examines the needs of families whose children have been removed and placed under protective care. In Alberta, 42% of the population of children in the care of the Minister of Social Services and Community Health in 1981 were of Indian origin (Johnston, 1983). When Indian

children are apprehended and placed little attention is given to;

1. the cultural values of the Indian community,

2. the role of the extended family in caring for the children,

3. the importance of stability and cultural identification over dislocation and displacement in considering 'the best interests',

4. the importance of early child rearing, cultural bonding, and visible social differences in placement, care and treatment,

5. the impact of the child's removal and acculturation on the larger community (Sullivan, 1983).

Red Horse challenges human services profesionals to "develop appropriate knowledge sources and subsequent programs" (1980, p. 466), that incorporate the features of rational behavior designed to build mutual obligation in family development in the Indian extended family system. He states that family function should not be taken for granted. Tribes and Indian organizations must become responsible for community standards of conduct which account for tribal value orientations. With such a cultural network, family re-entry becomes more broadly defined. Red Horse also calls for scholarly endeavors surrounding Indian family systems.

There are many implications for case management when the child that comes to the care of the child welfare professionals is Indian. Return to the family and thus a familiar culture and value system is essential, so the child is not left drifting in an alien culture (Goodluck, 1980). There often already is a support system built in, if the professionals look beyond their definition of the family to aunts, uncles, and grandparents. In fact the parents of the child will participate more actively in planning if they know the child will be raised in their culture (Goodluck, 1980; Goodluck and Short, 1980). Parents care about their children even if they may not be able to care for them, and often assume the family support system will provide for the child. Edwards and Edwards (1980) indicate the effectiveness of including the entire family in counselling. Sessions may need to be informal and require a longer time to build a relationship but the goals accomplished will be with the knowledge and support of a large number of significant people.

In defining counselling techniques that are applicable to Indian people, Trimble (1976) also mentions the utility of including others in the counselling session. He

particularly sees it as useful for avoiding errant interpretations and facilitating the counsellor's understanding of the client's frame of reference. Edwards and Edwards (1980) make the following suggestions for culture-specific techniques:

1. Do not refer to a deceased individual by name as it is a violation of tradition. A term such as brother, sister, etc. is acceptable. Use of a medicine man may be beneficial.

2. Reflect culture in role-playing techniques. eg., If a man has difficulty with a mother-in-law use an intermediary clan member in the role play, since there may be a prohibition against talking to the mother-in-law.

3. Be aware of the client's comfort with eye contact. It may also be a cultural prohibition.

4. Understand conflicts related to cultural values. eg., One must handle your own problems, or don't extol your own virtues.

5. Be aware of the setting of the interview and the comfort of your client in that setting.

6. Indian people tease and use humour as an indication of acceptance and comfort, this may help set a positive atmosphere.

7. Appointments must be consistently scheduled and kept, and if the client cancels let them know they were missed.

8. Be aware of the need for distance in the relationship, and at termination do not underestimate the relationship. The client may avoid termination.

Probably the most important technique will be that of flexibility. There is no simple definition of Indian values, or culture. Variations must be taken into account not only between clans or tribes, but between individuals.

G. Summary

By and large the focus of the literature on Indian people is a response to problem situations. Thus much of what is written and researched is drawn from work with dysfunctional individuals. Anthropological literature charts non-dysfunctional people or communities but tells little about the present characteristics of families. There is thus a great need to look at families who have not come into contact with social agencies due to problems and who are fully functioning in today's society.

Unfortunately similar problems and issues arise in the literature and theory on family systems. Certain dimensions are considered important but their relative importance and whether any others are being excluded is an unknown. By and large these dimensions have developed from work with dysfunctional families. However, these dimensions provide the background to the questions and issues which are raised by the review of literature available on Indian families and communities.
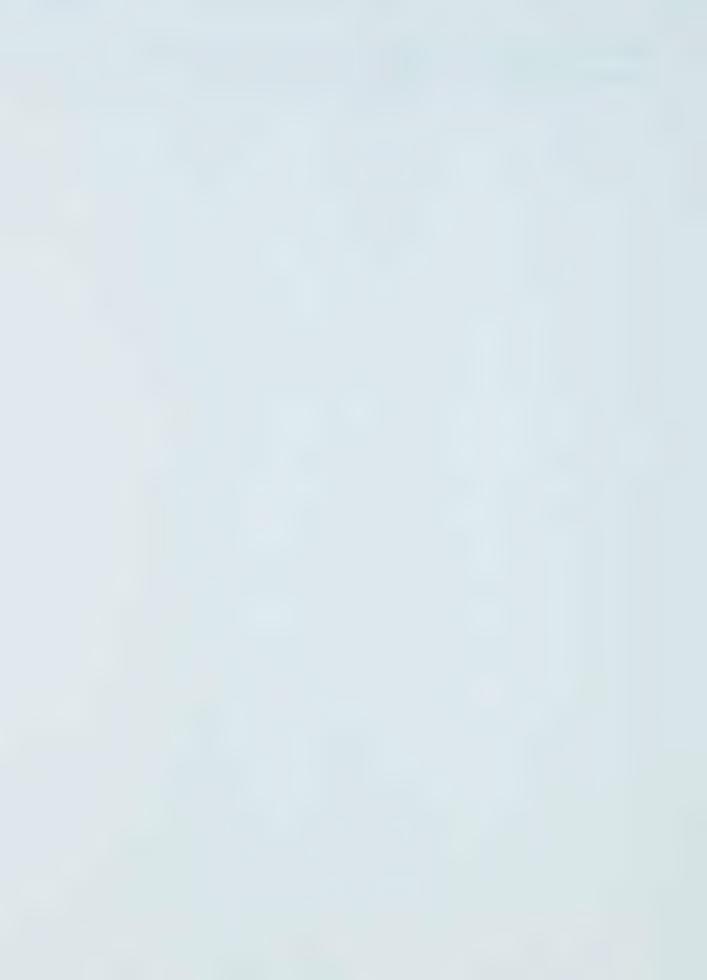
The first major issue is the lack of writing specific to a particular tribe. Only in the anthropological literature is there any writing specific to the Cree people. There is some mention of differences in values specific to several other tribal groups. The question arising out of this is: Are there some identifiable characteristics that are common among individuals and families of Cree origin? What might these characteristics be? Whether these are comparable to the literature on 'Native Indian' characteristics is also at issue. What are the implications of these characteristics for working with dysfunctional Cree families?

From the literature reviewed it seems apparent that there are differences in the definition of family, roles of family members, rules for relationship interaction and communication, and the values held by members of the Native American Indian culture as compared to the general population. A more specific question than the one previously noted can thus be defined; How do members of the Cree tribe define their family, and what are the roles and rules involved in that definition of family? What implication are there in this definition and the family rules for work with Cree families? As well, there is the question of the stated values held by members of Indian cultures as reported in the literature; are they accurate and what implications do these values have in the family context?

Some knowledge of the implications of culture and specifically Indian culture for the counselling situation is beginning to accumulate. Nothing could be found specific to the Cree people. It would be useful to know, from the perspective of Cree individuals, for what situations they might voluntarily seek counselling, and what characteristics should an effective counsellor have? It would also be important to know what they feel others in their community should or must seek help for. More and more Indian communities are taking over the provision of social services for their members. What types of services are

required by the communities? By means of an interview with Cree individuals an exploration of these questions has been undertaken in this study.

Chapter III

HOW TO STUDY THE CREE INDIAN FAMILY SYSTEM

The rationale for the methodology employed in this study is outlined, supported by writing from the areas of research methodology, family assessment, and research on the Indian people. The concepts relevant to this study are defined and the chosen method of collection and analysis is outlined.

A. The Background and Rationale for the Method of Study

As can be seen from the review of the literature the specific characteristics of the modern Cree family system have not been researched previously. It is therefore difficult to know exactly what areas of family life to assess or inquire about in order to better understand the 'normal' Cree family and be able to draw implications for work with dysfunctional Cree families. The research format was chosen to allow for maximum flexibility and information gathering in a variety of areas that have been identified in the literature on Indian people as relevant areas of difference from the 'white middle class' culture.

The term white middle class culture is commonly acknowledged as the point of reference from which many of the theoretical orientations and research being generated on families is based. Additionally, it is the culture that the author was raised in and is most familiar with. The areas identified as being important in the family assessment literature have been addressed. It is hoped that with a focus on questions which arise from the review of literature in the areas of family assessment and the Indian people, and the flexibility inherent in the method of research chosen, the characteristics of a normal Cree family can be explored.

The majority of the literature reviewed about Indian people was of an ethnographic nature, personal observation, or general conclusions drawn from experience with Indian people. There have been no attempts to study Indian family systems in any pre-planned, structured, and consistent manner. Some systematic research has been done in the area of education, specifically student testing. Some of the work done in that area is useful, as a model for the method of research chosen here. Additional input from the developing field of family systems research provided some of the concepts that were addressed in this

study.

Darou (1982) discusses the implications of the formal testing procedures of the WISC-R. He used an informal, flexible interview format to explore the question of what might be the most culturally appropriate manner of using WISC-R tests and how does one go about finding that out. Darou reasoned that;

> A rigid structural interview protocol was not considered practical in this study because it would break several cultural mores. It would be future-oriented instead of present-oriented, disrespectful and unsociable. (1982, p. 38)

A similar reasoning was employed in this study. A series of questions were designed based on the McMaster model of family functioning which addresses many of the areas of family assessment. The questions were flexible and open ended.

It was important to design the interview questions based on both the family assessment literature and that discussing the Indian people. Rothe (1982) states that traditional approaches to testing and surveys in the school system impose the researcher's framework on those answering. He notes the importance of language interpretation in the context of the local setting, and that the researcher's context may not be the same, or the researcher by virtue of being an outsider may be excluded from certain knowledge. Rothe states that ethnomethodological research is one way of doing research which takes the above problems into account. In this method of research the questions are asked and interpreted from the point of view of the interviewee. From Rothe's perspective all questions would be developed based on the review of literature on Indian people and the interviewee's perspective. However, it is essential to remember that those counsellors and social workers working with Indian families are trained in the language of psychology and the literature on family assessment. In order for the results of this research to be useful at both levels, there was a need to blend both perspectives. The structure of the McMaster model will, to some extent, impose limitations on the study by virtue of the model's value base.

More and more within the field of psychology recognition is being given to research methodology that does not follow the rigors of that used in the physical sciences. The essence of the ongoing debate is the question of whether the psychological (or human) sciences should follow the methods of the natural sciences or develop their own methods, and can the methods of the natural sciences be applied to the human

sciences? Polkinghorne (1983) presents a review of some of the alternative methodological systems of inquiry open to the researcher in the human sciences. He states;

> Science is not seen as an activity of following methodological recipes that yield acceptable results. Science becomes the creative search to understand better, and it uses whatever approaches are responsive to the particular questions and subject matters addressed. Those methods are acceptable which produce results that convince the community that the new understanding is deeper, fuller and more useful than the previous understanding. (1983, p.3)

In studying the family unit, one is immediately confronted with a whole. That whole is clearly composed of distinguishable parts. In other words, a system is present. In such a case it may be better to approach the study of the family unit as a whole with interacting parts, rather than analyzing the constituent parts. According to Polkinghorne (1983), this implies that attention is given to the organization of the system, and to the modes of information exchange or communication that take place within the system and between the system and it's environment. When studying the Cree Indian family then, it becomes important to focus not on the individual being interviewed but on his perceptions of family, community, and the culture that surrounds him.

In studying systems there are a number of issues that become important (Polkinghorne, 1983). Those particularly relevant to this study of Cree Indian family systems are outlined following. As already mentioned, attention must be given to the whole and defining part-whole relationships. There is the question of where to draw the boundary around the system. In this study the limits of the family and how the family is defined are set by the person being interviewed.

The systems approach to research explains generalizations and regularities by means of the underlying structural activity and this is how characteristics of the interacting parts are explained. Thus in the Cree Indian family one could look at the characteristics of any family by assessing the interaction of the family members and by examining the underlying qualities characteristic of the Cree culture. It is thereby essential to understand what those underlying qualities are, and how they are expressed. The means of doing this used here was to attempt to derive a series of statements representative of the value system of the Cree culture.

By virtue of viewing the family as a system, the researcher is imposing a particular way of describing the family on the outcome of the research. Formalization of cause and

effect or correlational relationships "necessarily implies that an important part of the meaning of human phenomena must be left out of consideration" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.203). This is one of the limitations of quantitative empirical research. A structured assessment tool was not used in this study in order to provide as clear an understanding as possible of the Cree Indian family and their experience of being a family. As previously mentioned though, a particular way of describing the family is still being imposed which may limit the information obtained.

The descriptive method can take a number of directions. In this study, within the imposed structure of the family system and the Cree culture a description of the invariant and essential structures, (Polkinghorne, 1983) was attempted. In other words an attempt was made to use an approach acceptable to and descriptive of both the Cree Indian community and the family unit familiar to researchers and professionals in the family assessment field. To this end a qualitative analysis of interview data was undertaken.

B. Definitions Relevant to the Nature of the Research

Prior to addressing directly the question of how the questions raised by the literature reviewed were answered, it is necessary to define a number of the concepts as they will be used in this research. This will be done from an operational point of view.

The concept of family is one which can have multiple definitions. These are often clarified by the use of prefixes such as 'extended', 'nuclear', and 'traditional'. Medicine (1981) summarizes some of the problems of imposing these various definitions when she states;

> Again, we are victimized by a dominant-subordinate relationship in which our unique and viable tribal entities are blurred, and a monolithic family unit results, which many of us categorically accepted without question. (p.13)

The concept of family needs to be defined broadly and from an Indian perspective in order that the results of this research be useful for Indian as well as non-Indian professionals. Family then will be defined as a social unit comprised of members of two kinship groups which are joined together by a matrimonial union of a member of each group. This union may be a legally recognized marriage or a union that is recognized by the members of the kin groups (Medicine, 1981). The key to this definition lies in the fact that it is a definition which relies on the members of the family to define their family.

The concept of healthy or normal family functioning is again subject to individual interpretation. Each of the theorists who address functional or dysfunctional family systems have their own definition. Family health seems to be defined by the broader society, and the definition of family health is legislated in this province by the child welfare act. The child welfare branch of social services is the enforcement arm of society. Therefore one way of defining health is through the legal operation of the views of society. This is the chosen definition of this research. It is an operational definition and as such has certain implications for the results of this study. For the purposes of this research, an individual was considered to come from a healthy family if that individual, or their children were not involved with the child welfare branch of Alberta Social Services and Community Health as children in need of protection.

The terms Indian and Native are frequently used interchangeably. They also subsume under their definition a number of groups that are distinct according to either the social definition or the legal definition of that group. To that end the following definitions have been used in this research:

NATIVE: A North American resident some of whose ancestors were members of the aboriginal tribes of persons living in North America prior to its settlement by those of European origin. This may include Indian, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

INDIAN: A person whose ancestors were the original peoples of North America. Distinguished from the Inuit and Metis but may include status and non-status Indian people.

CREE INDIAN: A person who's ancestors were members of the Plains Cree tribe of aboriginal peoples. Their anscestors spoke the Cree language and were united by race and custom. Status and non-status and Metis Cree Indian people may be included.

STATUS INDIAN: A person who is registered or entitled to be registered under the Indian act.

NON-STATUS INDIAN: An Indian who has enfranchised (sold rights); a woman who marries an individual who is not a registered Indian.

METIS: A person whose ancestors are both white European and North American Indian.

The concepts of values and culture are essential in a discussion of the family. The family is a major vehicle for the transmission of values and culture. The definition that Trimble (1976) provides as a basis for his discussion of Indian values is used here;

Values are specific concepts inherent within an individual's frame of reference. They are the means by which that individual identifies a set of expectations that generate behavioral solutions for particular problems encountered in life. When values are the same across many individuals those individuals can be said to possess a common culture.

Values are not the only component to culture. Culture also involves a commonality of way

of life, social institutions (eg. family), and personality characteristics which are passed on through generations (Nagler, 1976; Couture, 1971). In the research undertaken here, the commonality of family life within the Cree culture will be explored. It is important to keep in mind that the Cree culture has had many influences. It cannot be considered pure. It has been changed and influenced by a variety of phenomena.

There are a number of concepts generated by the language of family systems theory that must be clearly defined. They are generally used without a clear definition and no doubt are interpreted in differing manners by different theorists and researchers. The definitions of family and functionality or health have already been addressed. The concept of family implies a number of members belonging to that family. In attempting to describe or charactertize a family there are certain structural characteristics. These include the roles of members, and rules of behavior within the family. The role of a family member is the function that that member and others perceive as being performed by that person. Roles may be situationally varied. The rules of behavior for family members are those patterns of behavior that are expected to occur as a function of two or more members interaction. Rules can be deliniated for such areas as verbal interactions, emotional interactions, repeated patterns of interactions, particular developmental stages and how the family goes about solving problems. The rules are almost always implicit and difficult to identify. This research has only begun to identify rules for Cree families.

C. The Method Used in this Study

An interview guide was constructed by the author based on the areas of family functioning identified as important in the family assessment literature. These areas were drawn particularly from the McMaster model presented by Epstein, Bishop, and Levin (1978) since it addressed many different areas that were inclusive of other theorists models and additionaly presented specific hypothesis relative to functionality. The interview guide also included an assessment of the values that were considered, in the literature on Indian people, as being important to the Indian culture. Respondents were asked to orient these values in a family context. The final area of questioning was in regards to issues surrounding the counselling process. The questions were designed to elicit the personal experience of those being interviewed, in regards to their family unit.

As well the interviewee's perceptions of what makes a good counsellor were addressed. The interview guide which was used The interview guide provided questions on six dimensions of family functioning, based on the McMaster model, inquired as to how the concept of family was defined, and asked about the values of the individual and perceptions of the qualities involved in counselling.

The interview guide was piloted with three individuals in order that the language used in the interview and the concepts being asked about be clearly and easily understood by the interviewees. The questions were modified based on these interviews. The interview questions were designed as a guide, so variations in language and interaction with the individuals interviewed did occur.

The interviewees were selected to meet the following criteria. They were all to be of Cree Indian background and to consider themselves to be Cree. It was not necessary that they hold treaty status because such a requirement excludes many women and children who lost their status due to marriage. They were thus not necessarily raised on a reserve. They came from a functional or healthy family as defined operationally earlier in this chapter. They were living in Edmonton at the time of the interview.

The last criteria was included for several reasons. Firstly, that it would decrease the chances of the interviewer being misunderstood due to language and contextual differences and misunderstandings such as Rothe (1982) referred to. Secondly the trend at the present time is toward local bands developing their own family and social services which would not be available to those residing off a reserve. Therefore there seemed to be a greater need to understand the individual who is exposed to off-reserve life and issues. It is this population that social service professionals employed by the Province of Alberta are more involved with. Thirdly, those living on reserves may represent a more homogeneous or a very different population and the variety of life experiences as well as the commonalities were considered important.

Interviews were conducted by the author. The questions were used as a guide, and not followed exactly in order to allow the development of rapport and exploration of areas that were unclear (Bradburn, 1979). Permission was obtained to tape record the interview in order to check for consistency of the interviewer's questioning and to facilitate the interview process. Answers were thus not written down until after the

interview was completed.

The method of analysis consisted of reviewing the tapes and summarizing the answers of all individuals in each of the nine dimensions that the questions assessed. Similarities in answers to questions as well as differences were noted and described. The results are presented as an analysis of each dimension rather than as case analysis' in order to preserve the anonymity of the subjects.

The results of this analysis document some of the differences between Cree families which are not currently involved with the child welfare branch of Alberta Social Services and Community Health. Whether the results can be said to be indicative of families not meeting these characteristics is unclear. There may be some validity with populations not meeting these criteria but the reader should keep in mind the nature of the group when drawing inferences to populations with differing characteristics.

It is felt that the results obtained are reliably representative of the group interviewed. Interviewer effect on responses was minimized through the use of only one interviewer, thoroughly familiar with the study. The use of tape recording of the interviews also contributed to interviewer consistency. As far as possible the results are presented in the language of the subjects to ensure relatively unbiased presentation.

D. Summary

The method used was generated from the questions raised by a review of literature and theory on Indian culture and models of family functionality. This method of research is gaining increasing acceptance in the human sciences, and has been used in researching issues in Indian education.

An interview guide was piloted with three individuals of Cree origin in order to better assess the concepts studied and the extent to which the interviewer was able to communicate those concepts to the interviewees. The final interview guide was used to interview seven individuals of Cree origin. These individuals were drawn from healthy families living in the Edmonton area. The interviews were tape recorded.

The results were analyzed in nine different areas, and summarized for the group. Similarities and differences in response were noted and described. The results are felt to be reliable and valid for a population meeting the criteria used to define the characteristics

of the persons interviewed. The results may have a limited applicability to other Indian populations.

Chapter IV

THE RESULTS: A DESCRIPTION OF CREE INDIAN FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

A. Introduction

The following analysis of the interviewee's responses is subdivided into nine dimensions. The answers to questions designed to assess those dimensions are summarized. At times answers seemed to fit into several areas or into areas that were not meant to be addressed by that question. Such answers were dealt with in one of two ways. The answers were either arbitrarily placed into one of the dimensions that seemed appropriate or they were placed into a tenth area which served the specific purpose of reporting answers that did not fit anywhere else. It seemed that the greatest learning and understanding about the person being interviewed and their family occured apart from answers that were given to specific questions. Therefore this tenth area is important even though it was not a part of the interview structure.

A pilot study, consisting of three interviews was undertaken. Following that, some adjustments were made to the interview process, and then seven more interviews were completed. The results of those seven interviews are presented here. Prior to the presentation of those results, the process involved in the pilot study is briefly summarized.

B. The Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted for two purposes. In order to achieve reliable results the questions had to be understandable to those being interviewed. Thus in the pilot study the wording of questions and the questions themselves were quite flexible as the interviewer assessed the individuals understanding and reworked the language used to convey the concepts being asked about.

The second purpose of the pilot study was to determine how best to analyze the answers received, and determine any problems that might occur in that analysis.

The initial problem encountered with the interview was one of time. The interview took over one and a half hours to administer and additional time was required to build rapport with the person being interviewed and to explain some of the history behind the

study. The added time taken to do this facilitated the interview. For these reasons no attempts were made to shorten the interview times.

The questions were generally understandable to those being interviewed. Adjustments were made to the language of the questionairre for several reasons, as outlined following. Some questions asked for highly similar information and interviewee's were repeating themselves. For example the question on who belonged to the family and the question asking for a 'map' of family members were requesting the same information and so were combined to one question. The degree to which questions generated repetitive answers varied and so some questions which were similar were left in the interview. Other questions generated no information and so were removed. (eg. What other general value statements can you add to that list?)

There were some areas that were not asked about, but that those subjects in the pilot study felt were important and addressed in their answers, even though no specific question inquired about that area. In particular, the questions were revised to ask specifically about the roles involved in child-rearing and the behavioral control of children. It was stated by those in the pilot study that children were important, but no questions inquired about how children interacted in the family.

The questions were left in a general format even though this required some prompting and examples on the part of the interviewer. This facilitated rapport and left open the type of information received rather than directing questions to one area. As well this provided for a range of examples from those interviewed. This technique of interviewing though made presentation of the results somewhat more difficult due to the range of possible responses.

The placement of the questions regarding the family problem solving process tended to bias the answers to questions that followed in the direction of responses involving problem situations, particularly in the areas of communication and roles of family members. Thus in the revisions, this series of questions was moved more toward the middle of the interview. Changes were also made in the order of questions in the counselling section to adjust to the interviewees comfort with personal questions as opposed to abstract questions. This was done on an individual basis in the final set of interviews.

The changes in the language of the interview quide primarily reflect the difference between how the interviewer wrote and spoke. The revised interview quide attempts to present the questions in the manner in which they were asked, so that the reader has a better idea of the language used and how the concepts were addressed. The wording of the questions varied according to the individual being interviewed. Often areas were addressed in the interview that were not questioned at all in the written quide for the interview. An attempt has been made to reflect these in the analysis of the interview material, under the dimensions of analysis chosen.

C. The Results

The interviewees consisted of seven individuals of Cree origin, ranging in age from 27 to 51 years of age. Of these people, three were male and four were female. All individuals had children and three had grandchildren. Two individuals were alcoholics, having been 'dry' for 12 years. Both of these people had had their children apprehended by child welfare authorities and subsequently the children were returned to them. Three individuals had grown up living on the reserve. The other four considered themselves Cree but their parents were non-status or Metis and so they were ineligible to live on reserve land. All but one of those interviewed spoke the Cree language fluently, and had learned English as a second language. Six individuals were from Alberta, five were raised in North Central Alberta, the other had been born there. The other individual was from a reserve in Saskatchewan.

All those interviewed were employed in the field of the helping professions, though one was currently at university pursuing a business focus. They worked primarily in the educational, counselling, or social work professions. Several were involved in these contexts as cultural programers or consultants on the Indian culture; others provided services directly to Indian clientelle or trained those providing such services. In reviewing the results presented here it is important to consider this trend in the occupations of those interviewed. The group is not completely representative of the broader Cree population. The occupations of those interviewed tended to facilitate the process of communication and the understanding of questions during the interviews.

Those interviewed had completed education levels ranging from grade eight to third year university. All had been involved in ongoing inservice training relevant to their occupations.

Of the individuals interviewed four were familiar with the interviewer prior to the actual interview. Previous contact varied in terms of familiarity but all contact had been on a mutually professional basis. Two interviewees were contacted and introduced through a mutual third party, and one initiated contact after a letter went to the employer requesting volunteers for the study. It should be noted that four individuals refused to be interviewed; none of them had any previous contact with the interviewer and were approached by a mutual third party. A fifth refusal occured when the interviewer directly approached another individual. This lends support to the idea that the subject matter of the interview, which was fairly personal, made it essential that the interviewer be known, trusted, and respected by those interviewed. Concern for the issues being indirectly addressed (ie. Indian families in the child welfare system) was likely also a factor in the willingness of individuals to be interviewed.

The Concept and Structure of the Family

How the interviewees defined the concept of family and who they included in their family was critical to knowing who they were including in responses to questions in the other areas regarding family functioning.

The concept of family was defined by all those interviewed in terms of who might be included. The relationship terms of mother, father, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles were commonly used by all those interviewed. In addition to these, cousins were included by three respondents and 'family friends' were included by two respondents. For example, an interviewee stated *'when the girls across the street from us lost both parents they just started to call my mom and dad, mom and dad, it seemed natural'.*

Some of those interviewed (three) included more abstract concepts of the family in their definition. Statements included;

'Something that means much to me and gives me a sense of reference or belonging.',

'I don't consider myself to be seperate from my family.',

'I love my family now.'.

Interviewees were asked to draw a 'map' of their family that indicated the relationships of family members to themselves. Three of them refused explicitly or implicitly to make a visual representation. The reason for the refusals had to do with the extent to which the task was understood or could be easily accomplished.

Of the four family maps that were drawn, there were some common features. All of them included at least three generations and were arranged in a circle, usually with the interviewee in the centre of the circle. One of those who did not draw a family map described the family as being very close, with the interviewee at the centre. In two cases the family map included family members other than parents, grandparents, siblings, and children. One interviewee explicitly refused to draw the map because of the extent of inclusion in the family. Comments made by interviewees indicated that those included when they spoke of or drew their family were defined by a combination of physical distance and frequency of contact. The individual's quantitative definitions of these two factors varied.

Communication

The McMaster model postulates that clear and direct communication is found in healthy families. The questions in this area were designed to assess how family members found out about each other, and what types of information were commonly discussed. The freedom that members felt to inquire about or volunteer information was also asked about. Questions addressed both instrumental and affective areas of communication.

The families of all those interviewed communicated frequently, (once or twice a week) between houses of siblings and parents in the Edmonton area. Such interaction occured either by phone or visiting others' homes. The extent of inclusion in terms of who was considered family when the question was asked is clear here in that never was the question answered in terms of a single household. Instrumental communication did tend to be clear and direct. Topics included common activities and interests, money problems, family problems, and Indian politics. Most responses were inclusive of the whole family. In one case the interviewee indicated that there were some specific differences in how communication was carried out with various family members. With aunts she felt a need to explain what was happening and uncles or male cousins did a lot of teasing.

Affective communication did not seem to be as verbally clear or direct. Many of the responses indicated that non-verbal behavior might be important in affective communication, and that stronger feelings are not as likely to be discussed. Statements such as;

'We know enough when to stop and not to push people to talk.',

'I have a sense of knowing because our family is close.'

'I ask what's wrong based on how they look, how they sound.',

'I just know how they feel.',

were representative of the responses to questions regarding the communication of feelings between family members. Whether these statements can be considered clear and direct indicators is questionable, certainly family members would seem to have a clear understanding of the meaning. An outside observer might obtain a confused understanding though.

In at least three families there was some indication of a 'generation gap' in regards to the freedom to discuss affective situations. Statements indicative of this possible gap included;

'I find it hard to communicate with my mom and dad, especially when I see them doing wrong.',

'My generation doesn't resent it if I ask what's wrong, but the younger generation does.'.

An indication of the influence of family and the scope of the definition of family is found in the two following examples reported by interviewees. In terms of communication style they might be considered unclear and indirect, a form of communication the McMaster model postulates as most dysfunctional. Both these individuals considered their families to be normal.

> *My Dad lets me know when my behavior is inappropriate. When he feels like he has to be a Dad, he lapses into Cree or he teases me and I know he doesn't like what I'm doing. This was related by a woman, over 30, with several of her own children.*

> I had to find out myself, on my own that my sister was my mother. I had a hard time handling it and didn't accept for a long time that my mother never told me. My aunt (sister) used to tease me, I learned a lot from her. I first knew this when

I was 11, I didn't talk to my mother about it for a long time. I didn't call her mother until I was 22. Things are O.K. now. Our family is very close.

In contrast to these examples there were also two specific examples of clear and direct communication in the family. Due to the limited sample conclusions are impossible but it is worthwhile noting that each of the following examples came from interviewees with common characteristics. Both were counsellors and both stated that they were alcoholic, though had been 'dry' for many years.

I raised my children to tell me Mom I really don't want to talk about it, and they do.

I told them they have to accept themselves. I told them to stop phoning me for money and to just ask how I am once in a while.

Roles

The questions on roles inquired specifically as to the role of the individual being interviewed within their family, the activities they did for their family and why they carried out that role. Inquires were made about the parenting role. General inquires about other family member roles within the family were also made. Because of the limited number of interviewees the roles of a variety of family members can only begin to be defined. The McMaster model postulates that the more adequately roles are fullfilled and the clearer the process involved in assigning roles and holding family members accountable, the more functional the family.

The goals of the parenting role were fairly consistent among all of those interviewed. It was important to raise children with love and caring, to teach them independence, to teach them respect for everyone, to teach them that they are responsible to make choices and be accountable for them. The specific activities that the parents stated that they did for their children and the rules of their house varied. There were no contradictions. The variation may be due to individual differences in terms of how the question was interpreted, and to the relative ages of the children that belonged to each family. The activities and rules are outlined following:

I teach the girls to cook, clean, just as I do those things.

I provide a lunch for school and I encourage them firmly with kindness in school. I tell

them let's make Doctors and Lawyers.

I make sure they are clean on their way to school.

They keep their rooms clean.

They have curfews and if they're late I take that time off next time.

They don't talk back to their mom.

We negotiate use of the car, chores and who does them, family get togethers.

They have choices and must abide by the consequences of those choices.

I teach them who they are.

I teach them how important family is.

I play sports, organize activites with the children.

There were discrepencies in the amount of control that parents exercised over their older children's drinking. These seemed to be related to whether the parent drank or not. If they did not drink then drinking was forbidden in the parent's home. In another case drinking was encouraged in the home because it was safer there. Drugs were not allowed though.

In terms of the separation of the mother and father roles the group characteristics are such that little can be distinguished. All the women were seperated from their children's father and stated that they were primarily reponsible for raising the children even if they were established with a new male partner. One father felt that he was primarily responsible for raising the children, who were his wife's by a previous relationship. He believed this was due to the conflict in a mixed marriage of white-Indian. The other two fathers stated that their children's mother was primarily responsible for raising the children. They stated very different reasons. One stated the child was still young and would come to the father later. The other stated that his present goals in life had caused him to move to Edmonton and so the children were physically distant. He looked forward to being a father sometime later and had frequent contact by phone or in person with the children.

The roles that each individual felt that they played within their family seemed highly related to the occupation that they were pursuing. This role extended to adult brothers and sisters and their children, and occasionally aunts and uncles. Most of those interviewed were in the helping profesion. They saw their role in the family as that of an advice giver, a

guide, or a sounding board. In several cases the interviewee identified this role as having been passed on from a member of a previous generation in the family that held that role.

In four cases the interviewee had lived for an extended time in their teen years within a different household than their parents. The reasons were varied and included going to school, helping out with meeting the needs of another family, and the parent being unable to take care of the child.

In three cases the grandparent was identified as being a very important person in the interviewee's childhood, someone they were very close to. One interviewee stated;

> *My Grandfather took me everywhere. He taught me how to hunt, how to farm and how to survive off the land. He taught me the old ways.*

The following three examples of differing roles in Indian families were reported on an individual basis and cannot be considered representative, though there is some support for them in the literature.

> *My companion, who is white organizes. He schedules his life, and mine. He is very different from me. If I disagree I have a voice. I say what I need.*
>
> **I've carried on my father's tradition of raising our children's friends as sons or daughters. I often have to patch things up for them.**
>
> *There is a history of medicine people in my family. These things are passed on through a family. It doesn't happen in every family. I've been given various spiritual rights to be a spiritual leader in the community.*

Problem Solving

The questions on problem solving inquired as to what type of problems arose in the families of those interviewed and how the family went about solving those problems. The McMaster model postulates that functional families complete seven steps in the problem solving process, from identification of the problem to evaluation of the solution. The last step is not seen as being completed by many families. Problems can be classified as instrumental or affective, according to the model.

There were a variety of problem situations presented as examples of how the interviewee's family identified and solved problems. Regardless of whether the problem was instrumental or affective the family involved in the solution process came from

several households. Alcohol and/or drug use were identified by all of those interviewed as a problem. These situations will be explored further on in this section. The following problem situations were mentioned by at least two of the interviewees. The exact nature of the solutions were often specific to the family but there were certain commonalities, so an example of each is presented here.

My brothers or sisters, or my children are sometimes unemployed and need money. We all rally and help them out, pay their bills, look after the children for them. Who does what and how much is based on how much each person has to give. **Marital conflicts happen frequently, particularly with 'mixed' marriages. We tell each other what's happening and talk about it. People have to make their own choices though, make their own decision on a solution. Nobody tells them what to do, just gives them a different point of view. My parents would look after the children if that was needed. If the decision was to split the marriage then there are no hard feelings, we just accept that they didn't get along. The 'ex' is still a family member.**

The children might be fighting or not doing their chores. I want them to be more responsible. I let it go some, but if things are too bad or I'm in a bad mood I step in and tell them to do this. They tell me when things are resolved.

As previously noted alcohol was a problem in the families of all those interviewed. Siblings, parents, and children were included in those the interviewee saw as having such a problem. Four of the interviewees explicitly stated that they did not drink, and that was a choice they had made ten years or more previously. All those interviewed stated that the choice to drink or not was up to the individual. Several interviewees did not allow drinking or intoxication under their own roof but that was their only direct action regarding the problem. These were those that did not drink themselves.

There were individual differences in regard to the interviewee's response to a perceived alcohol problem. The following two examples stand out as being different than the more common response noted above.

My Mom parties sometimes now. I see this and I'm concerned. One time I talked to them. It was a bold effort. I broke down and cried like a little kid. I had to tell them first how much I respected them and was concerned for them. Since then I've

talked to them a bit more, but not much.

I tell my children they can drink at home. I prefer that. Their friends can as well, as long as their parents know about it and permit drinking at their house. I do not allow drugs under my roof though. But I never made a big fuss about them doing drugs. My kids told me once that it was good that I did that. If I made a big fuss they might have done more.

Common to most problem situations then, the problem was identified and communicated to other members, often beyond a single household. Solutions tended to support the individual encountering the problem but did not dictate what they must do. The final choice and decision was arrived at by the one experiencing the problem.

Affective Responsiveness

Epstein et al. (1978) postulate that functional families will show a wider range of responses to a variety of different situations. In other words affect will be more varied. They also state that this is an area where cultural differences are apparent. The questions were designed to discover what types of situations would generate strong feelings (and what were perceived of as strong feelings), and how those feelings would be expressed.

The interviewees provided a number of examples of situations which would generate strong feelings. Characteristically 'strong feeling' was interpreted to mean sad or angry by the respondents. At other points in the interview in two of three cases, the comment was made that we (family members) do not get really excited and jump up and down. The reader will note that love and caring are expressed in examples relative to other dimensions of the model. They are thus expressed by family members, but the questions here did not always elicit those responses.

One interviewee did mention love, caring and respect as being strong feelings which occured in response to children and parents. The latter occured particularly in situations where the parents were perceived as behaving inappropriately, making it difficult to say anything to them.

Most of the respondents stated that anything that was hurtful to the family would generate strong feelings of anger. The situations presented were both external and internal to the family. Education and how Indian people were treated in the schools both

presently and historically was one situation that stirred strong feelings of anger. The church evoked similar responses.

Internal family situations that were mentioned by two or more interviewees were drinking problems and broken promises. These two situations were often tied together, though not necessarily. These situations evoked sadness at first and later, if the situation persisted anger. Both were often expressed indirectly, as noted in the section on communication.

Death was another situation that evoked strong affect in family members. Actual responses were varied according to the situation of the interviewee. Death was commonly seen as a time when the family came together physically and emotionally and supported one another. The one closest to the person who had died was most strongly effected with sadness and according to one interviewee a brief loss of complete contact with reality.

Affective Involvement

The questions regarding affective involvement asked about the activities that the family participated in together, and from the interviewee's perspective who in the family they best understood, and who they knew the most about. The McMaster model postulates that empathic involvement with others is most functional. That is "family members can demonstrate a true affective concern for the interests of others in the family even though they may be peripheral to their own interests" (Epstein et al., 1978, p.26). The questions looked at the type of involvement family members had with each other and the extent of that involvement.

The type of activities that those interviewed participated in with their families included meals on a regular basis, and special occasion get togethers, (such as birthdays, death anniversaries, Christmas, New Years) pow-wows, Indian days, political endeavours, and regular visits to other's homes. These activities were consistent across all those interviewed. Participants included adult siblings, children, parents and seemed to be based on common interests. These activities were not required of family members but everyone participated.

The affective involvement of the family members of those interviewed would seem to fit the designation of empathic involvement. Epstein et al. (1978) implicitly define

the involvement of family members to be confined to those under one roof. In the responses of those interviewed, involvement clearly extended over several households at the empathic level. Activities such as going out for dinner, going to a movie were mentioned by several interviewees to be spontaneously organized to include several households. In at least three cases in-laws who were no longer married into the family would be included in family activities and gatherings. Such inclusiveness might be seen as over involvment when 'family' is defined differently then the way this group defined it.

The answers to the questions designed to assess if there was more involvement with certain family members than others indicated that physical distance was one relevant factor. Those that were physically closer to the interviewee (ie. in the same house or in the same city) were often mentioned as being better understood or those about those about whom more was known. Characteristically the interviewee would at first refuse to answer this question, stating that there were no favourites or that he/she had equal knowledge and understanding of everyone in their family. In all but one case though this statement was followed by a characterization of the interviewee's relationship with several family members. The descriptions indicated that there was one member that had a more involved relationship with the interviewee. There was no pattern characteristic to those relationships.

Behavior Control

On the dimension of behavioral control the McMaster model postulates flexible control applying reasonable standards and accounting for context as functional. Behavioral control is thought to develop in three types of situations. The questions were designed to assess what the respondents felt constituted a situation of that type and how the family would respond. A separate question inquired about controlling the behavior of children in the family. Interviewees were also asked how a family members behavior would be changed by the family.

In the area of physically dangerous situations, three of the interviewees presented potential suicide as an example of such a situation occuring in their families. The others spoke in more general terms of physical violence to family members. Alcohol was mentioned as being involved in both these areas. The response to such situations were

generally the same depending upon how directly the interviewee was involved. With one exception the answers to this question indicated that the interviewee received information from someone else in the family about the situation. Dependent upon the extent of impending danger there was first a process of discussion among various family members (residing in different houses). Someone, often the same person in a variety of situations, would be appointed to speak to the person in danger and express the feelings of the family group. The person in danger would be persuaded to stop or brought to a family home to be cared for. In situations of immediate danger, the stronger members of the family would be contacted first and they would immediately go to that person and protect them.

In situations involving the meeting of family members' various physical needs, none of those interviewed referred to those living in their houses when citing examples. It may be that the needs of those living in the same house are never questioned or explicitly identified. Such an explanation is supported to some extent by the answers that were given which involved other households. All interviewees indicated that food, money, clothing, a place to sleep would immediately be provided for those that needed it. There was some variation in the extent to which this might be controlled. Some expected the favour to be repaid, others did not. Some expected that the person would move on when they were 'on their feet' or if the strain became too great on the provider.

The third situation, that of controlling socializing behavior of family members differed according to whether the behavior occured inside or outside of the family. Generally there were few controls placed on the behavior of family members in a visiting situation. This was particularly evident in non-family situations, where respondents expressed little or no interest in knowing what was happening or controlling the situation unless they were present. In family social situations the controls were similarly lacking except for some specific areas such as alcohol consumption, and embarrasing or hurting another family member. These were mentioned by two or three interviewees.

The behavioral controls placed on children were varied according to the individual interviewed and the age of the children, but some commonalities were evident. Voices were rarely raised with children and discipline was generally of a verbal nature rather than physical punishment. Respect for older people was expected and pointed out when it was

lacking. All adults of the family present were expected to correct the children's behavior, though the children were responsible for how they behaved.

The means by which the families of those interviewed went about changing the behavior of a family member was also quite similar within the sample. Members of the family would discuss the issue amongst themselves. In addition they would confront, talk to, try to persuade the one they wanted to change by stating that such behavior is inappropriate and that other alternatives were open. Such alternatives would be presented, based on the experiences of the one talking. In most cases this was the extent of attempts to change behavior. In one case the interviewee indicated that if this process was unsuccessful the offending member of the family would be shut out, or ostracized by the rest of the family until the behavior was changed. They would not be told directly what was wrong or that they were unwelcome but they would know. This was generally effective and once the behavior changed that person was readily accepted back into the family.

The families of those interviewed seemed to have a more laissez-faire style of behavioral control, rather than a flexible style. Individual freedom and choice of action were generally important, though some attempts were made to influence the nature of that action. Overall, the final choice and responsibility seemed to be left with the individual. There were some indications that this was true with children as well as adults.

Values

The questions on values inquired about what the interviewee valued and felt to be important to themselves, within their family, and in the Cree culture. As well a series of value statements presented in the literature on Indian people were presented to assess the accuracy of the literature.

What those interviewed value and felt personally to be important varied according to the point that they were at in their lives. The ideas they expressed reflected the personal growth occuring in their lives at the time of the interview. Family life was valued by all those interviewed; in particular the closeness of the family was important. Education was important to at least three individuals. Education was clarified as meaning not just school but also the wider experience of the world. Independence and freedom to choose

were mentioned by three individuals as important to them in their lives. Nature, it's ability to provide for people and the respect it should command was stated as a value by two of those interviewed.

The important or valued areas of family life for those interviewed were also consistent. Children, caring for them and loving them were expressed as important to the interviewees. The harmony and closeness that individuals found within their families were also valued. This harmony and closeness extended across several households and beyond the boundaries of the city. Somehow the values of harmony and closeness within the family and that of independence and freedom of choice were not incompatable to those interviewed.

Values that were felt to be important in the Cree culture varied substantially among individuals. Three general orientations could be distinguished. The first orientation (expressed by two interviewees) was that the Cree culture had no specific and distinguishable values. Values were seen as personal and the culture so broken up that nothing specific was left. The second orientation, which could be considered the opposite end of a scale, (expressed by two individuals) was that the values of the Cree culture were tied up in the circle of life and the four directions that were understood and believed in by the Cree people. The old ways were important and representative of the values of the Cree culture. The third general orientation (expressed by three individuals) was that family and community were highly valued in the Cree culture. The family base was the key to the sense of community and both were very important within the Cree culture. These three orientations could not be explained by any specific characteristics of the individual's backgrounds. Exposure to 'cultural awareness' workshops during inservice training may have been a factor. Since this exposure was not specifically asked about with all interviewees it cannot be specifically implied as a factor.

The values specified in the literature as being Indian are presented individually here, along with the responses of those interviewed, as to interviewee's belief in each value. Explanations for the validity of the values are included.

TIME IS ALWAYS HERE ONE ONLY NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR THE MOMENT.

Four of those interviewed believed this to be true. One person did not agree. One was unsure but in explaining the answer seemed to feel the statement was true. One individual refused to answer because the interviewer had not taken any cultural awareness classes and would not understand. The general orientation to this statement was expressed as, 'the past is gone, the future is not yet here and you must get happiness from the now'.

ONE RECEIVES FROM OTHERS IN ORDER THAT ONE MAY GIVE TO OTHERS.

All of those interviewed, except one believed that this statement was correct. The one person was unsure of the meaning of this, and said that one could expect nothing in return.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE COME ONLY WITH INCREASING AGE, AGE IS A GIFT, TO BE RESPECTED.

Three individuals felt this was true. Three were unclear on how to respond and one believed it was a false statement. Everyone explained their answer to this statement, and all but one were oriented in the same manner. It was felt that age was unnecessary for wisdom, that young people could also be knowledgeable, and that experience played an important role. The one person who felt this was a false statement explained that one had to earn respect, and that very few people were able to earn that respect.

IT IS REQUIRED THAT ONE BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS IN NEED.

All but one interviewee felt this statement was accurate. Few explanations were given. Explanations focused on the ideas that you never know when you might need help yourself, and it was important to be helpful only if help was wanted.

ONE IS ONLY A PART OF NATURE AND AS SUCH HAS NO RIGHT TO CHANGE OR DESTROY NATURE.

Four individuals stated that this was true, and the other three were not sure. Explanations focused on the question of what nature was, and how the world could progress if nature went unchanged. The influence of the modern technological world could clearly be seen in the responses to this value.

SPIRITUALISM IS A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE THAT CONFIRMS AND ENHANCES ONESELF AND OTHERS.

Five individuals believed this statement was true, the other two were not sure. From the explanations given it was clear that some individuals believed it as a true statement but did not apply it to themselves. As a total way of life one had to work at being spiritual, was one explanation. Another was that care must be taken that those 'spiritual people' don't develop 'holier than thou' attitudes. The belief that one needed more than spiritualism was also expressed.

IF ONE FAMILY MEMBER DISAGREES WITH THE REST, THEN ALL OTHERS SHOULD RECONSIDER.

Four individuals held this to be a true statement. One was not sure and expressed a conflict between the statement and the idea that parents are responsible for the decisions in the family, and one shouldn't disagree. This was the belief of the youngest person interviewed, and the statement that this was changing was also included in the explanation. Explanations to this statement focused on the individual variability that was possible within certain situations, such as the fact that everyone in the family might not be there to participate in the discussion.

CHILDREN DEVELOP STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY BY VIRTUE OF BEING ACCORDED THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY.

Only two individuals agreed with this statement, the rest were not sure. The focus of the explanations was on the modern community and how broadly the word community could be defined. Most individuals felt that the statement should be amended to read family instead of community, since one often did not know the community people today. Other factors that were included were the importance of significant others in developing behavior patterns, and the need for the child to accept himself within the community.

As can be seen there is some disagreement by these Cree people with the values held in the literature to be 'Indian'. There are also some individual differences among them and there may be some generational differences as well. Overall, the majority of those interviewed agreed with the statements which are outlined in the literature as being representative of Indian values. Often there was a close split though, so these value statements should be interpreted as applicable to today's Cree people with caution. There may be a need to 'modernize' the statements. It is also unclear whether the results of this small group would be applicable to those presently living on reserves.

Counselling

The questions on counselling attempted to assess how the families of those interviewed would seek outside help and for what types of situations. The interviewees were asked what type of problem situations would be kept within the family. They were also asked questions to assess their perceptions of what characteristics a helping professional should possess, the knowledge they should possess, relative to Cree culture, and what a helping service should provide to Indian people. The responses of those interviewed were fairly consistent and highly similar in this area. There were occasional exceptions which will be noted in the following.

The family, in particular the older members, were the ones that would deal with problems that arose in the family. In most cases any personal problems, such as suicide, marital issues, children's difficulties would be dealt with in the family. Alcohol and drug abuse problems were dealt with in a varied manner and seemed more likely to be an issue for which outside help was sought when the family could not deal with it. There was an emphasis on prior knowledge of the trust worthiness and competence of any professional whose advice was sought. People would seek help from someone they knew or who was highly recommended to them.

Those interviewed indicated that seeking help outside of the family for instrumental or pragmatic issues would be more likely to occur. These issues included social assistance, legal advice, help with housing, learning problems for children, educational resources, medical difficulties. One individual did contradict some of this general orientation by stating that children's problems and severe illnesses would be dealt with by the family.

In regards to what were important characteristics for an effective helping professional to possess there was a high degree of consensus. The characteristics that were essential included a caring attitude, open mindedness, honesty, the ability to listen, a non-judgemental attitude, attentiveness, and an appreciation of the individual and the uniqueness of their situation. Some of those interviewed expressed some resentment and anger that often assumptions were made on the basis of the client's Indian background, and that some helping professionals saw only their own point of view and direction, thus making decisions for the client.

There was variation in terms of what interviewees believed to be important aspects of the Cree culture about which a helping professional should have knowledge. The same three general orientations that could be distinguished in the previous section regarding Cree values were also evident here, though there were some differences in terms of who expressed those orientations. Three people did not believe a helping professional needed to know anything about Cree culture but rather emphasized the need to appreciate the individual. Two individuals believed that a general knowledge of the differences between the Cree culture and the helping professional's own culture and value system would be essential. This could be learned through the client but again it was essential to get to know the individual and not judge their belief system if it was different from the helpers.

Two individuals gave fairly detailed explanations of what they felt was important in the Cree culture. Because they complimented each other they have been combined here as one example. The example is presented much as these two people worded it. It should not be considered characteristic but is presented in detail because such an explanation was not found in the literature reviewed earlier.

> There are four directions. They are God's workers. The buffalo, the sun, the thunder and the wind. I pray to the sun spirit. Without these things we would die, they look after us. The people of the world can also be represented. The Native people came from the buffalo. The white people came from the wind, always rushing, changing, progressing. The oral traditions of the Native people are not recorded. You must get out and live with them to understand. They are being left further and further behind in technology. We must take our ways of surviving, living off the land and use those. Our songs, our druming and celebrations are our insides, without those we are a shell. When they legally cut off the Sundance they severed the womb of our spirituality. It's like killing the people. We cannot compete with technology because of our lack of power and land base. We must learn to use technology to help us and adapt the old ways to the new life. We have a choice. The church condemns the old ways, and many leaders are confused because they were raised by the church so they don't listen to the old ways. It is important to be sensitive to the culture and issues being faced on a daily basis. Meals for example,

many Native families don't eat regular meals. How can they perform mentally if they are not physically nourished? The old ways can be taught in the schools. You just have to get them curious. I just tell them a story.

The interviewees had varying opinions as to what a helping service should offer to the Indian people. Most felt that the service should meet the needs of the individual and the community it served. The only way to do this was to listen to the people. One person refused to answer as to what the Indian people were saying they needed in the Edmonton area. Others interviewed felt that the self-esteem and personal awareness of the Indian people were critical areas in which people needed help and that this would fullfill the needs of the people. One person suggested that strengthening the family unit, particularly in the city was essential since the family unit was lacking for many people in the city.

Background Issues to Understanding Families

There were a variety of stories and suggestions that occured during the course of the interviews that could not be categorized into the areas selected for analysis. In terms of beginning to understand the experiences of the individual and of the Cree Indian people they were helpful, and indicate the extent of some issues that are important when the helping professional works with a Cree Indian family. They are presented here as a series of examples, for the reader to consider.

Indian Affairs and religous groups have been bad. They and alcohol just about destroyed the Indian people. They took away their selves and their responsibility. Alcohol though has motivated a lot of Indian people. It taught them to be hustlers, to survive, and once they get over the need for alcohol they apply the skills they learned when they were drinking.

My grandmother was raised by the nuns, my Grandfather was raised by an Auntie and married her straight out of the nunnery. My Grandfather was run off the reserve. He farmed there for a long time, and then because he was not there when the treaty was signed and his name was not there they ganged up on him. Even his own relatives went against him. He became independent, he survived without welfare, and farmed off the reserve. He was very strong willed due to this treatment by friends and relatives. These things are important to

understand my family. He passed on these qualities.

My first husband is still my father's son in law. There is no hostility or derogatory comments. He is still a part of the family. Because I married him I am treaty Indian.

My Grandfather was very sick with arthritis for many years. He called in a medicine man from the states, who came and cured him. He was running through the field chasing horses. Sometime after that he kept saying he was going to retire, looking for a place to retire. We saw four big birds in the sky. He said they were spirit birds. They didn't come down to earth, except when people died. We had never seen them before. He was going to die and knew it, but we didn't. He left my family the ceremony, the medicine and the sweat lodge because he said there was no one for him to pass these on to at home. So he left them with us.

They keep putting kids into 'Native' schools that don't belong. Those kids have done drugs, and get into all kinds of trouble. How can they learn like that. They need a place to go where they can be fixed, then they can come to the schools.

When I went to school, the residential school, you would not believe the things they made us do. We couldn't talk Cree, they made us sleep with our hands folded under our heads. One time I wanted so bad for my nun to recognize me, for her to like me, I had a bath in peroxide, I thought that would make me white like her and then I would be important to her.

D. Summary

The sample of seven individuals interviewed generated a lot of information. There was a wide range of individual differences, some of them specific to the characteristics of that person in terms of age, experience, life style, and schooling. There were also some common characteristics among those interviewed.

In the area of family fuctioning there were no particular contradictions to the model used to examine families and its postulates regarding healthy functioning. Rather the information gathered seemed to supplement, enhance and clarify the model relative to the Cree people. There is some indication that one must take a broader interpretation of the

postulates of healthy functioning. (eg. Clear and direct communication may be implicit and non-verbal.) The most outstanding characteristic was the number of different houses included in each individuals definition of family. This influenced all six other dimensions of the model and stood out as different from the definition of family implicit in the model.

There were some common disagreements with the values generally presented as 'Indian'. There were also some individual disagreements among those interviewed. There are a number of possible explanations for these disagreements, such as age, geographic location of early rearing, growth with the overall societal norm, exposure to life in the city, and education. The reader should to be aware that there are some general value statements attributed to Indian people in the literature that are not held by all the Cree Indian people, as determined by this small sample.

This group of respondents was very helpful and quite specific at times about the process of counselling or helping Cree Indian people. There clearly is a reluctance to go to strangers for help. What this is related to is not specifically known. Some explanations could include the Cree culture, expectations of any healthy family regarding surviving on their own, those interviewed being themselves in the helping profession, the extent of familial resources being so large, and perhaps other explanations as yet undiscovered. The most outstanding point to remember relative to counselling with the Cree people is to be aware of and appreciative of their individual differences and the time it takes to develop a trusting relationship.

This small sample of Cree individuals and their family characteristics begins to provide a basis from which the reader can compare his / her beliefs about healthy families to family life for the Cree Indian people. Some tentative conclusions and recommendations for working with dysfunctional Cree Indian families may be made, but by far the results offer only a beginning to direct further exploration.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Overall the results of this study confirm much of what is written in the literature on Indian families. There are some areas, particularly relative to values, that were contradicted. The characteristics of the group of Cree Indian people used in this study must be considered when these results are interpreted. From the results presented here many more questions for research can be generated, and more specific answers will be possible. No previous attempts have been made to study the Cree Indian family from a functional perspective. Anthropological research on the Cree people and research on the Indian people from the perspective of dealing with dysfunctional families have to some extent been confirmed by this approach to researching Cree families. There is some indication that anthroplogical research and research based on dysfunctional families is lacking in certain areas.

To begin with this chapter compares the results of this study to what was reviewed in the second chapter. There are four areas of comparison; comparison to the theoretical literature on family functioning, comparison to the literature on Indian families, Indian values, and the counselling process with Indian people. Some possible explanations for the similarities and differences are given. Implications are drawn for working with Cree Indian families. Areas for further study and some direction for how to go about more clearly defining the characteristics of Cree Indian families are offered.

A. A Comparison of the Results to the Literature Reviewed

The results of this study in the area of family characteristics were obtained using a model of family functionality that was not specifically Indian. In contrast to what is often stated by those writing on Indian families, (Sullivan, 1983; Tafoya, 1982; Medicine, 1981), the results do not necessarily contradict the postulates of the model that was used to look at family characteristics. There are several possible explanations for this.

The model that was used in this study, (Epstein et al., 1978), was chosen because it encompassed aspects of many other models. It did not explicilty define the structure and inclusiveness of the family system. The participants in the study were asked to do that, rather than having that definition imposed. The interview questions, relative to the family

were open ended both in terms of who in the family was being asked about, and what behavioral situations were defined. Again these definitions were left up to the study participant rather than being imposed by the interviewer, or the model of family functioning. This flexibility and definitional perspective likely played a major role in the extent to which the family characteristics described by the group interviewed fit appropriately into the model's definiton of functionality.

There were some dimensions of the model in which the judgement regarding healthy or unhealthy could be seen as a value imposition. In particular those that dealt with affect in the family and the expression of affect were open to interpretation. Using this model puts some limits on the researcher in terms of interpreting such things as 'clear and direct' communication, and the overinvolvement of family members.

The affect that was overtly or verbally expressed most commonly was anger. There are several implications or conclusions to be drawn from this. In terms of what was just noted relative to interpretation of the model, anger was the response to questioning on the dimension of Affective Responsiveness. Other emotions were expressed in response to other areas of questioning. This would seem to indicate that anger is an overt response, easily expressed verbally, while other emotions may be more non-verbal in their expression. This has some implications for counselling in that it may be necessary for the counsellor to deal with anger as an overt expression of other emotions, and to facilitate the individual or family examining the underlying emotions. The counsellor should also be aware that the family may well be cognizant of those emotions that underlie the anger and are able to deal with them through the expression of anger.

The Indian people, as a population, are in a state of growth and change relative to their development economically, socially, and politically. The anger expressed, relative to the previous discussion, was often in regards to the unjust imposition of systems of social institutions such as the church or schools. Thus the overt expression of anger could be seen as the first stage of change in the Indian population being expressed by individual members of that population.

It seems that one can use this model of family functioning effectively when studying Cree Indian families, provided that there is room for interpretation and extension of the model. It is essential to be aware of the potential for value judgements in the model

being used. It is also essential that the concepts be presented in a language understandable to the interviewee. The model should be considered a base, or beginning and not an end product.

Because a 'non-Indian' model was used to assess the family unit it presents a limitation to this study. It is possible that some dimensions of Cree family life were missed entirely, and others were judged from a non-Indian value system. The McMaster model was chosen as a basis for imposing a structure on the collection of information on family characteristics because it was inclusive of several other models or theories, was not as limiting, and seemed to be open to interpretation. This was likely an important factor in how easily it was applied to assessing this group of Cree individuals and their families.

The participants in this study all lived in the city of Edmonton, and most worked in the helping professions. The contact that they had with 'white middle class' culture was likely extensive. This factor probably had some influence in terms of how well the individuals being interviewed understood the questions and underlying concepts.

In Chapter Two the Indian definition of the concept of family was summarized from the literature to be; a social unit, including but not limited to all kin of the individual, whereby children were central, and there were strong bonds and obligations among family members. This definiton was essentially confirmed by the participants of this study. The results did confirm that non-kin could be included in the definition of family and also that there were strong bonds and obligations that extended across many households. While it was clear that children were important, and well cared for, their relative importance in the family was not clear. Perhaps the importance of children in the family is not expressed verbally, and was not apparent from the interview format of this study. As well there were few questions that asked specifically about children. This puts some limits on the conclusions that can be drawn from this study relative to the child's place within the family.

There was some indication that 'arranged' marriages, as mentioned by Mandlebaum (1979), may be relevant to the experience of the older individuals interviewed, (ie. the grandparent generation). Other family characteristics mentioned in the anthropological literature were variously confirmed. Certainly the age of adulthood, and often with this group the age at which the participant had had children was young, at 16 or 17 years of

age. The concepts of freedom and responsibility were confirmed, and to a limited extent the nature of the relationships between children and grandparents and male and female cousins were also confirmed. Parent-in-law avoidance was not found to be practiced still. The particular traditions associated with puberty were also not clearly evident. It is possible that the impact of the modern society and urban living has had a major influence in these areas. Those individuals who were older and/or had more extensive exposure to reserve life tended to mention these areas as being consistent with their family experience. One cannot dismiss totally the idea that what was written about Cree Indian life several generations ago is invalid, rather it must be applied with caution to modern families.

The idea that the Indian family system fosters interdependence, and family involvement was definitely confirmed by this study. The apparent paradox that self-reliance and independence are also encouraged was additionally confirmed. How this seeming paradox can exist is hard to explain except from the point view of an imposition of another value system. Evidently these two areas are not mutually exclusive as might be expected.

Goodluck's (1980) statement that proximity and friendship are important to family relationships, particularly in an urban setting was confirmed. The addition of non-blood relations to the family group was common in this group of interviewees, and additionally divorced in-laws were at times included in the family group. Contact with those in the city was frequent.

The idea that family members' roles can be conceptualized along a continuum of caring as Red Horse (1980) defines roles, was to some extent confirmed. The parent role largely involved meeting the physical needs of the child and the grandparent role involved more of the teaching and meeting of affective needs. These roles did not seem to be defined by biological relationship but rather by age or experience. ie., A grandparent role of teaching, and guiding might be carried out with that individual's adult children or other friends, siblings, as well as grandchildren. The 'continuum of caring' concept was accurate but not complete in representing the varying roles played by the group of individuals interviewed for this study. There were other roles mentioned, such as spiritual leader in the community, a distinction between male and female parent roles, advice giver, and a

distinction between White and Indian roles in mixed marriages, that seemed equally important to the family functioning.

This group of individuals provided a rich array of experiences indicative of the rules evident in Cree Indian family systems. The literature seems to focus on the rules of interaction with children in the family except for that which was already noted relative to Mandlebaum's (1979) outline of relationship rules.

By contrast the individuals interviewed for this study focused on the members of their family other than children. It is not easy to compare these different foci. Rather they should supplement each other. The results of this study do not contradict and in fact confirm many of the rules of interaction with children reported in the literature. The rules of family interaction from this study fill in the rules of interaction on the dimensions of problem solving, affective responses and involvement, and behavioral control relative to both children and adults in the family.

The difference between the literature and the results of this study is likely due to the model used for this study and the lack of specific questioning regarding children. The literature focuses on social services relative to child welfare. It is children that individual's working with families would want to know about. If a truly cross-cultural perspective is to be taken in working with Cree families then the characteristic rules of interaction with both children and adults need to be known.

The concerns raised by the literature on Indian peoples communication styles were not evident in the group interviewed. In terms of their communication with the interviewer, all were highly skilled in interaction and had little difficulty expressing their thoughts clearly or understanding the interviewer. It is worth while to note that one individual used he and she interchangeably when reporting a highly emotional incident involving a female friend. This together with the reported communication patterns relative to feelings seems to indicate that the literature has some validity at least relative to affective communication. As previously noted, emotions are not generally expressed overtly and may be difficult for an individual to identify verbally, though it seems that other family members do understand.

There are several possible explanations for these contrasts. The group of individuals interviewed had all had some exposure to inservice training in the helping professions which often involves communication skills. It is possible that the difficulties in

communication reported in the literature would be more evident with people on reserves who had not had as much exposure to the English language and 'White' communication styles. A further possibility is that there is a difference between perceived or reported communication patterns and actual. This could only be confirmed through actual observation of the family. Finally, one must bear in mind that the majority of those interviewed were familiar with the interviewer. An unknown interviewer might have had a different experience. Verbal skills and the individual's level of comfort with another person seem to play a definitive role in that person's communication skills.

The impacts of the religious groups and the educational system imposed on the Indian people, as noted in the literature were essentially confirmed by several individuals in the study. Other historical influences outlined in Chapter Two were not mentioned, though neither were they specifically asked about. This may be due to the occupational orientation of this group of individuals and their knowledge of the issues and implications of religious and educational issues for family life. Some interesting questions and alternative perspectives were raised from an examination of these results and the overall literature.

If the residential school system is so largely responsible for family breakdown, how does one explain the almost equal proportions of Metis or non-status Indian families and status Indian families involved in child welfare? Perhaps there are other more, or equally important factors, such as economics, lack of appropriate skills for contending with the influences of modern life, value impositions on family life, prejudice toward Indian people, and stereotyping. There are many ways to look at the various historical influences on Indian society and the explanations of their impact.

There are a number of ways to explain the differences in value structure between this group of individuals and those values reported in the literature as being Indian. One possiblity is the difference between the general and the specific, (ie. Indian and Cree Indian values). There are other reasons that are likely more influential. This group of individuals were all urban dwellers and might have been more influenced by a different, non-Indian value system. It may be that the values reported in the literature are some what out of date. The comments of the group interviewed here would seem to support that, as they mentioned modifications relative to the progress of modern technology, and the changes in the modern community. The possiblity of changed and changing value systems was

noted by Couture (1972) and is confirmed here.

Nagler's (1976) proposed system of classifying urban Indian populations in terms of the relative importance of Indian heritage and culture was essentially confirmed by this group of respondents. However, this classification could only be applied in terms of how important that individual believed it to be that cultural heritage and customs should be known, retained and passed on, in other words, what that person held as ideal. The classification did not distinguish the values these individuals actually held or whether they themselves were involved in cultural activites and to what extent. Nagler's system is useful from the point of view of classifying model behavior but it cannot predict beliefs, values, or the involvement of an individual in cultural activities consistently. This does not seem surprising since often what an individual says and what he does can be very different according to his self-awareness, perceptions of other's beliefs, and the difference between talking about and actually doing some behaviors.

B. Counselling: A Comparison to the Literature and Recommendations for Work with Families

The literature on how to counsel with Indian people was confirmed by those participating in this study. The most important point made both in the literature and by study participants was that individual differences among individuals must be considered. Individual differences of opinion relative to what was important in the counselling process in regards to the culture and services required by the Indian people were great just in the group of seven individuals interviewed.

Some of the more specific reflections of culture noted as essential in the literature were not evident from this group. The suggestions made by Edwards and Edwards (1980) relative to in-law avoidance, comfort with eye contact, use of humour, were not evident in the responses of this group. One area not addressed by the literature was the need for the helping professional to know the spiritual and cultural underpinnings of the Cree culture when working with Cree Indians. The perceived importance of this knowledge varied according to the individual within the group of people interviewed.

Based on the literature and the additional results of this study a series of recommendations can be made relative to working with Cree Indian families in an urban

setting. These recommendations will also likely be applicable to other Indian groups and in reserve settings, with some obvious adjustments relative to the client population and their unique characteristics. These recommendations should be considered a minimum in terms of knowlege, skills and technique applicable to working with Cree Indian families.

1. At all times base the work on individual family characteristics rather than application of techniques for 'Indian' families or cross-cultural counselling. Be aware of and knowledgeable in the later, but do not let it over ride the individuality of clients.

2. Allow the family maximum control in all aspects of your relationship with them. Give them the responsiblity for making decisions and carrying out tasks. When they present a particular problem, find out who would solve that if you were not available and allow them to work through a solution with minimal interference on your part.

3. Expect that it will take time to develop a trusting relationship. Allow the family to do the talking and extend your period of assessment. During the assessment period inquire about general areas, such as who else is a part of their family, the contact they have with other family members, general problems in the family, and who usually deals with them and how. Ask generally about their values, living conditions, expectations for how things should be. Keep questions minimal and general so that you obtain a broad picture of their family life and determine their internal resources.

4. Be prepared to include family members beyond the household you are assigned to work with, or at least to contend with or consider how these others will respond to changes in the family.

5. Be aware of what your values are in regards to family life, how to raise children, what's important or necessary to your life. Do not impose your own expectations on the family you are dealing with, rather find out what their values are.

6. As well, be aware of your own stereotypes and expectations relative to the Indian people and do not impose those on the family.

7. Contact and work with other family members and members of the Indian community relative to what the family needs. These people are a good resource and easily available to you and the family.

8. Develop a list of resources that serve Indian people in the areas of counselling, legal advice, education, housing, addictions. Keep in touch with these agences and utilize

them as resources, both for your own knowledge and to be helpful to families you work with.

9. Develop your knowledge in the areas of Cree spiritual beliefs, value systems, family life, child rearing practices, social interaction patterns through reading literature from related fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, religon, education. Expect that there will be contradictions, the expression of beliefs in these areas will vary according to individual differences, so get as wide an exposure as possible. Supplement reading with workshops and discussions with respected Indian individuals. Many of the traditions are learned and passed on orally.

10. Become knowledgeable in the historical issues relevant to the Indian population such as education, treaty rights, political issues of self-government, land claims, the impact of religous groups, and economic conditions. All these have a potential impact on the family you are working with. Do not expect that the issues will always apply.

11. There are a number of issues or problems that seem more prevelant in the Indian community and which effect family life. Be prepared to deal with alcoholism, suicide, marital problems, (particularly for White-Indian marriages), self-esteem, educational concerns for children and adults, and death and dying.

C. Areas for Further Study

This study generated many more questions than it answered. It was designed as a beginning, an exploratory and descriptive study. It provided a place from which to identify and confirm in a systematic manner the impressionistic research on Indian families done previously. Essentially this was done and some new areas were identified, but most importantly this study indicates that systematic research on Indian families is possible and needed. It provides a format from which further research can be done. It also points out the areas lacking or incomplete in terms of completing such research.

To begin with the question of how specific one needs to be in terms of identifying the tribal population of the study should be addressed. From this study and the literature one could conclude that there are few specific differences in family lifestyle or value orientations among different tribes. However, this is one of the few studies attempted

that looks at a specific tribe of people, and the group selected were all urban dwellers. More research in terms of the characteristics specific to a particular reserve, geographic rural region, or a different urban tribal group is essential before this question can be clearly answered.

This study did not use a 'control' group. It would be useful to repeat the study with a group of white middle class urban individuals to determine if any differences or similarities exist. The assumption has been made that such differences would exist based on the personal experience of the author, and the comparisons that were made by those interviewed. Such as assumption should be confirmed.

The foregoing involved looking at population differences. This study also raised a number of areas that were touched on but not explored in detail. The question of how children are raised, disciplinary techniques, philosophy of caring and how children are taught by their parents, extent and nature of their relationship to various significant other individuals was not clearly answered by the results of this study. It has been extensively treated in the literature. Systematic research in this area is needed.

The research method used in this study was designed to provide a number of behavioral situations or issues important to families that were presented by the interviewee, rather than judgements on issues presented by the interviewer. The situations reported here could be used to develop a family assessment questionairre, or to modify existing questionairres to provide more culturally appropriate questions.

Further research is needed into the values of the Cree Indian people (as well as other tribal groups). This study indicated that not all those values reported in the literature were accurate. There is a need to assess both what people say they hold as values and beliefs and how consistent their behavior is with those value statements.

This study seemed to confirm that it was possible to look at family functioning in a different culture (ie. the Cree culture) through the structure of a theoretical model on family functioning with minimal modifications. This needs to be further researched. Such a tentative conclusion may be an artifact of the characteristics of the group of people interviewed, or the particular model used. Would the format used in this study be useful with and understandable to a different group (eg. individuals not active in the helping professions themselves)? Would a different model of family functioning have been just as

useful, or would it have missed certain aspects relevant to Cree family life?

Overall, the results of this study represent a beginning, conclusions can only be tentative, if they can be made at all. There is a need for further study to build upon the dimensions identified here as relevant to Cree Indian family life and to explore those areas missed by this study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bransford, Jim. (1982). To be or not to be: Counselling with American Indian clients. Journal of American Indian Education, 21, 18-21.

Burgess, Bill. (1980). Parenting in the Native American community. In Fantini & Gardenas (Ed.), Parenting in a Multicultural Society (pp. 63-73). New York: Longman Inc.

Cheda, Sherrill. (1977). Indian women. In M. Stephenson (Ed.), Women in Canada (pp. 195-208). Toronto: General Publishing Co. Ltd.

Christiansen, Ron & Daniels, Christine. (1970). Many laws . Edmonton: Canindis Foundation, Metis Association of Alberta.

Clatworthy, S.J. & Gunn, J.P. (1981). Economic circumstances of Native people in selected metropolitan centres in western canada. Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies.

Couture, Joseph E. (1972). Alberta Indian youth: A study in Cree and Blood student conflict. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Cromwell, Ronald E. & Olson, David H. (1975). Power in families. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.

Darou, Wes. (1982). Canadian Native people and psychological testing. School Guidance Counsellor, 37, 37-41.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. (1980). Indian conditions: A survey. Ottawa: Author.

Dunning, R.W. (1971). Changes in family and marriage among the northern Ojibwa. In K. Ishwaran (Ed.), The Canadian family (pp.355-367). Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd.

Epstein, N., Bishop, D. & Levin, S. (1978). The Mcmaster model of family functioning. Journal of Marriage and Family Counselling, 8, 19-30.

Edwards, E.D. & Edwards, M.E. (1980). American Indians: Working with individuals and groups. Social Casework, 61, 498-506.

Fine Day. (1973). My Cree people. (Adolf Hungry Wolf, Ed., stories reconstructed from original field notes.) A Tribal handbook of good medicine, #9.

Foley, Vincent. (1974). An introduction to family therapy. New York: Grunne & Stratton, Inc.

Frieson, John W. (1975). Traditional Plains Indian world view: Some comparisons and challenges. The Northian, 11, 29-34.

Gibson, John. (1972). A small and charming world. Toronto: William Collins, Sons & Co., Ltd.

Goodluck, T.C. (1980). Strength of caring. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 61, 519-520.

Goodluck, C.T. & Short, D. (1980). Working with American Indian parent: A cultural approach. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 61, 472-475.

Hanson, J.C. & L'Abate, L. (1982). Approaches to family therapy. New York: Macmillian Publishing Co., Inc.

Hawthorn, H.B. (Ed.). (1967). A survey of the contemporary Indians of Canada. Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, Queen's Printer.

Johnston, P. (1983). Native children and the child welfare system. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers.

Kantor, D. & Lehr, W. (1977). Inside the family. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss Publishers.

Kirkness, V.J. (1981). The education of Canadian Indian children. Child Welfare League of America, 60, 447-455.

La Frambroise, T., Dauphinais, P. & Rowe, W. (1980). Indian student's perceptions of positive helper attributes. Journal of American Indian Education, 19, 11-16.

Leichter, H.P. & Mitchell, W.E. (1978). Kinship and casework: Family networks and social intervention. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Litterell, Mary Ann & Litterell, John M. (1983). Counsellor dress cues: Evaluations by American Indians and Caucasians. Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology, 14, 109-121.

Mandlebaum, D.G. (1979). The Plains Cree. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre.

McClain, S. (1977). Parenting the culturally different. Paper presented to Fifth Annual Conference on Minority Studies. University of Wisconsin.

Medicine, Bea. (1981). American Indian family: Cultural change and adaptive strategies. The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 8, 13-23.

Meyer, D. (1976). The Red Earth Cree: History and culture, a preliminary report. Unpublished manuscript, University of Manitoba.

Nagler, Mark. (1975). Natives without a home. Toronto: Longman Canada Ltd.

Nye, F.I. & Berardo, F.M. (Eds.). (1966). Emerging conceptual frameworks in family analysis. New York: The MacMillan Company.

Olson, D.H., Russell, C. & Sprenkle, D. (1983). Circumplex Model of marital and family systems VI: Theoretical update. Family Process, 22, 69-83.

Olson, D.H., Russell, C. & Sprenkle, D.H. (1980). Circumplex model of marital and family systems II. In John P. Vincent (Ed.), Advances in Family Intervention, Assessment and Theory. Greenwich, Connecticut: Jai Press Inc.

Pelletier, W. (1971). For every north american Indian who begins to disappear I also begin to disappear. In W. Pelletier (Ed.) For every North American Indian who begins to disappear I also begin to disappear (pp. 3-23). Toronto: Neewin Publishing Co.

Ponting, J.R. & Gibbons, R. (1980). Out of Irrelevance: A socio-political introduction to Indian affairs in Canada. Toronto: Butterworth and Company, (Canada) Ltd.

Price, J.A. (1978). Native Studies. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, Ltd.

Red Horse, J.G. (1980). American Indian Elders: Unifiers of Indian families. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 61, 490-493.

Red Horse, J.G. (1980). Family structure and value orientation in American Indians. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 61, 462-467.

Rothe, J.P. (1982). Researching Native education: An ethnomethodological perspective. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 9, 1-11.

Savishinsky, J.S. & Savishinsky, S.F. (1980). The cultural context of family drinking in a Hare Indian community. In K. Ishwaran (Ed.), Canadian families: Ethnic variations (pp. 280-291). Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd.

Sealy & Kirkness (Ed.). (1973). Indians without tipis. Winnipeg: William Clare Ltd.

Simonson, David A. (1972). A comparison of Indian and non-Indian value orientations. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alberta.

Sullivan, T. (1983). Native children in treatment: Clinical, social and cultural issues. Journal of Child Care, 1, 75-94.

Tafoya, Terry. (1982). Coyote's Eyes: Native cognition styles. Journal of American Indian Education, 21, 21-33.

Trimble, J.E. (1976). Value differences among American Indians: Concerns for the concerned counsellor. In Counselling across cultures (pp. 65-81). Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press.

Van Dyke, E.W. (1982). Cultural differences in family structures: A practical application. Unpublished paper.

Watzlawick, P. & Weakland, J.H. (Eds.). (1977). The Interactional View. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Westward, M.J. (1983). Cross cultural counselling: Some specific problems and recommendations for the canadian counsellor. Canadian Counsellor, 17, 62-66.

Wilkinson, G.T. (1980). On assisting Indian people. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, 61, 451-454.

PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

I am trying to find out what a "typical" or "normal" Cree Indian family is like. I hope that the information I gather from you and others will help myself and other helping professionals to better understand how to work with Cree Indian families that come into contact with the social service system.

I am trying to develop clear, understandable questions so please feel free to comment or make suggestions.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

first name:
age:
Where are you from?
How many years have you been off the reserve?
What educational level are you at?
What is your occupation?

FAMILY QUESTIONS

To begin with I would like to find out about your family.
1.   From you perspective, how would you define your understanding of a family?
2.   Who are the members of your family?
3.   If you were to arrange them, on paper, in a "map" that indicates their relationship to each other, how would that look?
4.   What are some typical problems that arise in your family?
     Which would need a family decision in order that your family continue to be as it was. How would your family go about ???? Interviewer to pick 2 problems, one characteristic of an instrumental problem and one characteristic of an emotional problem.
5.   How do you know / find out what is happening in the lives of other members of your family?
     What might they tell you about? What might you ask about?
     Examples. Interviewer to assess difference in content or procedure between differing generations of the family.
6.   How do you know when a particular member of your family is feeling a particular way? Give examples of family members and how you know what they are feeling, and what that feeling is.
7.   What role do you have in your family? ie. What activities do you do for your family? Why do you do those activites?
     What things would you do for specific members of your family? Examples.
8.   Which of the above activities are necessary to your family and which might be considered unnecessary?
9.   How are you held responsible / accountable for doing those activities by your family?
10. What type of family situations would generate strong feelings in your family? What might those feelings be? How would those feelings be expressed? (Examples)
11. What activities does your family do together? Are there things that you do in particular with your children? Are there things that specific people do?
12. Who's situation (ie, life, thoughts, activities) do you best understand in your family?
13. Who's situation do you know the most about?
14. Would you give me some examples of your involvement with those people?
15. Could you give me an example from your family of each of the following types of

situations:
I A family members life is in danger.
II A family member requests that you meet certain needs. (food, sleep)
III A family member is visiting with another family member / A family member is visiting with a non-family member.

16. For each of the above situations suppose the family was not happy with what was occuring. How would your family go about controlling that situation?

17. Could you give me an example of a situation where you / your family would like to have another family member change?
How would your family go about getting that change to occur?

VALUE QUESTIONS

I would like to find out what you value, what is important to you.

18. What do you feel is important to you in your life? What is important to you in your family?

19. Ideally how should a family be?

20. What do you think are the important values found in the Cree culture?

21. For the following statements could you tell me if you believe they are true or false. Could you explain your answer.

TIME IS ALWAYS HERE, ONE ONLY NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR THE MOMENT.

ONE RECEIVES FROM OTHERS IN ORDER THAT ONE MAY GIVE TO OTHERS.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE COME ONLY WITH INCREASING AGE, AGE IS A GIFT, TO BE RESPECTED.

IT IS REQUIRED THAT ONE BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS IN NEED.

ONE IS ONLY A PART OF NATURE AND AS SUCH HAS NO RIGHT TO CHANGE / DESTROY NATURE.

SPIRITUALISM IS A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE THAT CONFIRMS AND ENHANCES ONESELF AND OTHERS.

IF ONE FAMILY MEMBER DISAGREES WITH THE REST, THEN ALL OTHERS SHOULD RECONSIDER.

CHILDREN DEVELOP STNDARDS OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY BY VIRTUE OF BEING ACCORDED THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY.

22. Would you add any other statements to the above list?

COUNSELLING QUESTIONS

Many families these days require help from someone to deal with problems in their families. I would like to find out how best to help Cree Indian families.

23. What kind of situation would you or your family seek help for from a social worker / counsellor?

24. What characteristics should the helper possess to best help you?

25. What situation might your family look for help in changing?

26. Who would they go to? Would this be different in a different situation? Example of what situation they might felt must be kept in the family. How would that be dealt with?

27. What should a helper know about the Cree Indian culture to be most effective in helping an individual or family?

GENERAL SUMMARY

28. Is there anything else that you feel is important to Cree family life that we have not talked about?

29. Do you have any comments or questions about what we just discussed?

FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

I am trying to find out what a "typical" or "normal" Cree Indian family is like. I hope that the information I gather from you and others will help me to understand better how to work with Indian families.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

I need some information so that when I write this up, I can state the range of people that I interviewed and their general characteristics.

First name;
Age:
Where are you from originally?
How many years have you lived in Edmonton? (approximately)
Why did you move away from the reserve?
How far did you go in school?
What is your job/position?

FAMILY QUESTIONS

I would like to ask some questions about your family.
1. From your point of view, how would you define your understanding of family?
2. Who do you consider to be the members of your family, and if you were to arrange them on this piece of paper to indicate their relationship to each other and yourself, how would that look. Use circles for the women and triangles for the men.
3. How do you know or find out what is happening in the lives of the members of your family?
    Are there particular things they would tell you or are there particular things you would ask about?
    How would those things be different according to the particular person you are talking to? (Examples of generational differences, location differences, etc.)
4. How do you know how the members of your family are feeling? (Examples?)
5. What role do you have in your family / What activities do you do for your family?
    Why do you do those things?
    Are there specific things you do for specific members / or specific things that certain members do for others?
6. How did it happen that you began that role?
7. Why does your family expect this of you?
8. How do you raise your children?
9. What are some typical problems that arise in your family? How do you know that that is a problem and how does the family go about solving those problems?
    How do you know when the problem is solved?
10. What types of situations would generate strong feelings in your family? How would those feelings be expressed? (Examples)
11. What activities does your family do together?
12. Are there things that you would do with particular family members and why would you do them with that person?
13. Who do you best understand in your family?
14. Who do you know the most about in your family?
15. For each of the following situations could you give me an example of something that could have occured in your family and how the family dealt with the situation or how would they go about changing that situation?
    A) A family member's life is in physical danger.
    B) A family member requests that certain basic physical needs, such as food, sleep be met by the family.

C) A family member visits with another family member.
D) A family member visits with a non-family person.

16. How would your family go about getting a family member to change their behavior if you were not pleased with it?
17. How is the behavior of children controlled in your family, and who is responsible for that control?

VALUE QUESTIONS

I would like to switch now and talk about values for a while.
18. What is important to you in your life, what do you value?
19. What is important to you in your family?
20. Ideally how should a family be?
21. What do you think are the important values found in the Cree culture?
22. For the following 8 statements could you tell me whether you think it is true or false and explain why if you wish to.

TIME IS ALWAYS HERE, ONE ONLY NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR THE MOMENT.

ONE RECEIVES FROM OTHERS IN ORDER THAT ONE MAY GIVE TO OTHERS.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE COME ONLY WITH INCREASING AGE, AGE IS A GIFT TO BE RESPECTED.

IT IS REQUIRED THAT ONE BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS IN NEED.

ONE IS ONLY A PART OF NATURE AND AS SUCH HAS NO RIGHT TO CHANGE OR DESTROY NATURE.

SPIRITUALISM IS A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE THAT CONFIRMS AND ENHANCES ONESELF AND OTHERS.

IF ONE FAMILY MEMBER DISAGREES WITH THE REST, THEN ALL OTHERS SHOULD RECONSIDER.

CHILDREN DEVELOP STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY BY VIRTUE OF BEING ACCORDED THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY.

COUNSELLING QUESTIONS

Many families today need help to deal with the problems that are occuring their families. I would like to find out how best to help Cree Indian families.
23. What type of situations might your family require help to change? Who would they go to? And would there be a difference according to the situation?
24. If you were offering a helping service for Indian people what issues would you feel it was important to address?
25. What type of situations would your family definitely keep in the family? How would those be dealt with and by whom?
26. What characteristics should a helping person have?
27. What should a helper know about the Cree Indian culture to be most effective in helping a family?
28. What type of situation would your family seek help for from a social worker or counsellor?

GENERAL SUMMARY
29. Is there anything else that you feel is important about Cree family life that we have not talked about?
30. Do you have any comments or questions about what we have talked about?

THE ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT STUDY

A. Introduction

The pilot study was conducted for two purposes. The first was to test out the language and concepts of the questions asked in the interview. In order to achieve reliable results the questions had to be understandable to those being interviewed. Thus in the pilot study the wording of questions and the questions themselves were flexible as the interviewer assessed the subjects' understanding and reworked the language used to convey the concepts being asked about.

The second purpose of the pilot study was to determine how best to analyze the answers received, and determine any problems that might occur in that analysis. The analysis section of this write up provided a format for the final analysis and is quite closely comparable.

B. Analysis of the Pilot Interviews

The interviewees for the pilot study were three females, ranging in age from 34 to 52 years. All were familiar with the interviewer through previous contact but the extent of contact and their familiarity with the interviewer varied. The educational level of those interviewed ranged from grade eight to completion of a four year bachelor's program and some postgraduate work. All three were engaged in work in the helping professions and might variously be called teacher, social worker, counsellor, consultant on Indian cultural issues, and director of a particular program to meet the needs of Indian people. These titles might be applied to each of them at various times in the occupations they each hold. All of them grew up on reserves, two in north-central Alberta, and one in Saskatchewan (southern). They had lived off the reserve for 15 to 35 years due to their schooling needs and / or marriage.

The following analysis of the interviewee's answers covers nine dimensions. The answers to questions designed to assess those areas are summarized. At times answers seemed to fit into several areas or into areas that were not meant to be addressed by that question.

The Concept and Structure of Family

The concept of family was understood by the interviewees to be a support group, that shared good and bad times. The family was seen as a unit that was bound together and worked together to build a unified front. The structure of the family, or those that interviewees considered to be their family always included three or four generations and with one exception extended to the siblings of the various generations (ie. brothers, sisters, nieces, nephew, cousins, aunts, uncles) of the person being interviewed. Generally when the interviewee talked about their family in response to the questions in the dimensions that follow those discussed were those living in the proximity. In the case of the three women interviewed for this study those close to them geographicly tended to be female, either sisters, mothers, or daughters. This occured even though they included brothers, fathers, in the definition of their family.

There was no distinguishable patterns to the family maps drawn by the interviewees. Who was included varied from just the interviewee, her children and grandchildren (no spouses) to the interviewee, all siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, neices, nephews, and their various spouses (deceased and divorced). In one case the sister of the respondent's parent was considered to be grandmother and called NOHKOM.

Problem Solving

The questions on problem solving inquired as to what type of problems arose in the families of those interviewed and how the family went about solving those problems. The McMaster model postulates that functional families complete seven steps in the problem solving process. Problems can be classified as instrumental or affective, according to the model from which the questions were qenerated.

There were a number of examples of problems that arose in the families of those interviewed. The problem situations which included family involvement were; a female member not taking proper care of her children, lack of money to support a family member, a family member dying over a prolonged period of time and being unable to communicate with the family, a family member being unable to communicate with spouse, and a family member running for political office. The families of those interviewed went through all the steps presented as essential to healthy functioning by Epstein et al. (1978).

There were minimal differences in the pattern of response to any particular situation by the family. Characteristicly one individual identified the problem either by being directly effected, (eg. A child who's mother has not returned home at the proper time and is thus not being cared for.) or by noticing the existance of the problem through regular visiting of the person(s) effected, (eg. A regular visitor notices that mother is not caring for the children properly.).

At this point, the response to each situation was identical for all the subjects interviewed. The person identifying the problem communicated the problem to the rest of the family which included siblings, children, and parents. In some cases, the problem would also be communicated to aunts, and uncles. All these individuals had input into a group decision about what was to occur, and who would be responsible for carrying out various actions. If the problem was not corrected the process would repeat itself, otherwise nothing more was done.

To give the reader a clearer idea of the process, an example from one of the interviewees follows. A mother, away for a period of several days did not come back when she was supposed to. The babysitter left the children alone. The oldest child, several hours later called one of the mother's sisters who then notified the other sisters living in town. By phone they agreed that each would take one of the children and care for them. When the mother returned she was embarrased and ashamed. There was no need for anyone to comment on her actions and it never occured again.

Differences among the families were noted in the style of intervention, which varied according to the type of problem as well as the family. In one case money was directly requested when needed, and you honoured the person you asked for money as they could then share with you. In another case you could tell if a family member needed

money when you visited, or they might hint about it. Commonly, money or physical needs were never refused (this became more evident in responses to the questions on behavior control). In the area of personal affective problems, such as marriage issues between spouses, the extent of the families input also varied. In one case the family group (siblings and parents) made the decision, that they should not interfere. In another case the 'solution' would be to offer the individual examples of how others had solved similar problems. It seemed that the final solution in personal matters was always left up to the individual, though family were almost always consulted.

Communication

The McMaster model postulates that clear and direct communication is found in healthy families. The questions in this area were designed to assess how family members found out about each other, and what types of information were commonly discussed. The freedom that members felt to inquire or volunteer information was also asked about.

The families of all those interviewed communicated frequently, (once or twice a week) between houses of siblings and parents. Instrumental communication did tend to be clear and direct. Topics included common activities and interests, money problems, family problems, and Indian politics.

Affective communications did not seem to be so clear or direct verbally. Those interviewed stated they could 'just tell' how someone was feeling, sometimes without even seeing the person. If there was a 'bad' or problem feeling, gentle inquiries might be made, or it might happen that family members would visit and just 'be there'. In the families of all three interviewees children would communicate personal problems and feelings to their mothers but not to their siblings. The extent to which the mother sought the advice of others was generally limited.

Communication within the families of those interviewed clearly extended over several households in Edmonton on a frequent basis, and often went beyond the city and even beyond provinicial borders on a frequent basis.

Roles

The questions on roles inquired specifically as to the role of the individual being interviewed within their family and why they carried out that role. An attempt was made to determine how the family held that person responsible for the role they played. This latter question was not generally understood and so was droped from the final revised interview.

Because of the limited number of interviewees the roles of a variety of family members can only begin to be defined. None of those interviewed could say how they were held responsible for performing a particular role. It either 'just happened' or they 'had to do it'. The assignment of roles and their accountability seemed to be fairly implicit in all cases.

The role was generally assigned due to family circumstances or the decision of the parents of the family. The role seemed to be relatively permanent, and had begun early in life. All those interviewed, who were engaged in the helping professions, performed this role within their families, both for their children and for their siblings. In one case the role was also performed for the parent of the interviewee. The role involved being asked to solve problems, give advice, care for family members who needed it, and being expected to be there in an emergency.

There were a number of common points made by those interviewed. The eldest daughter helped mother or acted as mother in caring for her brothers and sisters. The eldest was also the child felt to be closest to the father in a family group. As mothers became older they were looked to for guidance and counselling. They adopted the role of a guide. There were a variety of reasons besides age for taking on this guide role. There were also a variety of reasons, such as illness and death, for the helping role performed by those interviewed within their families.

Affective Responsiveness

Epstein et al. (1978) postulate that functional families will show a wider range of responses to a variety of different situations. In other words affect will be more varied. They also state that this is an area where cultural differences are apparent. The questions were designed to discover what types of situations would generate strong feelings (and

what were perceived of as strong feelings), and how those feelings would be expressed.

The interviewees provided a number of examples of situations which would generate strong feelings. Characteristicly 'strong feeling' was interpreted to mean sad or angry by the respondents. At other points in the interview in two of three cases, the comment was made that we (family members) do not get really excited and jump up and down.

The experiences cited by respondents were interesting to the author and so have been summarized here. The reader may note that they are experiences that are common to many families and see nothing unusual, or the reader may also see some interesting points dependent upon his / her beliefs about families.

Funerals and death were felt to generate strong feelings of sadness, by one interviewee. The sadness, expressed through crying was felt for the spouse of the one who died because of their loneliness. There was a lot of support for the one who was left alone. All the children, brothers and sisters and their children gathered around and visited frequently in the time after the death.

Abuse of a family member by someone outside the family was seen as something that produced strong feelings of anger. The example of abuse was, when a nephew is being 'put down' in school then aunt was called in to deal with the school and express the family's feelings. The aunt was called in for two reasons. First of all she would be more objective, and secondly she was a teacher and had experience with the school system and so could speak to the teacher and the principal.

Another example of a situation which initially generated strong feelings was when one family member in a strongly Catholic family switched religons. Anger was expressed by adult siblings when they condemed the 'screwy ideas' of that individual. Mother was initially angry but then got 'fed-up' with the condeming attitude of her children and told them off. At this point the incident resolved itself to feelings of respect for each other's differing opinions.

As can be seen from the examples the dimension of affective responsiveness extends to all those in the family, seemingly on an equal basis, (among siblings, children, parents, at all levels of the family). There may be some power to control the extent of expression of the responses vested in the older members, or the more experienced

members of the family, as in the last example.

Affective Involvement

The questions regarding affective involvement asked about the activities that the family participated in together, and from the interviewee's perspective who in the family they best understood, and who they knew the most about. The McMaster model postulates that empathic involvement with others is most functional. The questions looked at the type of involvment family members had with each other and the extent of that involvement.

The type of activities that those interviewed participated in with their families included meals on a regular basis, and special occasion get togethers, pow-wows, Indian days, political endeavours, and regular visits to each other homes. These activities were consistent across all those interviewed. Participants included adult siblings, children, parents and seemed to be based on common interests. They were not required of family members but everyone did participate.

All those interviewed indicated a particularly close relationship between mother and one of her daughters, though not necessarily the same daughter that mother was most knowledgable about. This closeness included mother seeking daughters advice in at least two cases. In all cases the existance of this relationship was not acknowledged to the rest of the family in any direct manner. Those interviewed characteristically answered the question about closeness with one particular member by indicating the relationship and also characterizing the relationships that existed with other family members.

One of the individuals interviewed indicated the relationships that a variety of other family members had with each other. While the responses might better fit under the family roles dimension, they will be included here. Father was involved in many activities with his children. These were primarily outdoor activites, trips to the lake, teaching about nature. This type of activity on father's part was indicated by two of those interviewed. One of the 'aunts' in the family of one respondent organized all the children on a regular basis for outings and activities together. The interviewee indicated "the children are calling her all the time, where are we going to go this weekend auntie". The other interviewees indicated contact between the children and their aunts occured but gave no indication of the

frequency or extent of involvement.

Behavior Control

On the dimension of behavioral control the McMaster model postulates flexible control applying reasonable standards and accounting for context as functional. Behavioral control is thought to develop in three types of situations. The questions were designed to assess what the respondents felt constituted a situation of that type and how the family would respond. Interviewees were also asked how a family members behavior would be changed by the family.

The situations presented in the first area (physically dangerous situations) included children's endangerment by being left alone and/ or prowlers and situations in which someone was very sick or dying. In both cases the pattern of response was immeadiate and extensive within the family. The adults of the family were contacted (siblings or parents) and arrived at the home where the situation was occuring. They offered support, corrected the situation and stayed until the danger was no longer present.

In the second area (meeting basic physical needs) all those interviewed indicated that they would house, feed, give money to any of their adult siblings or adult children that needed to be provided for. There would be no hesitation. In all cases some limits were put on the length of time that such provision would be made, these limits varied according to the family. If it became a 'manipulation' then all the family members would decide together that it was in that person's best interests that the family not provide for he/ she anymore. Once a person was 'on their feet' they would no longer be provided for. The one in need could or would move on to another family member if the need arose.

In the third area (socializing, visiting behavior), frequent social contact occured among family members. In only one case was there any attempt to control visiting among family members.The host was responsible for this control. It was carried out somewhat indirectly. "I got a small apartment so I would not always be giving meals because I got tired or it." Visiting did not stop it was simply modified in this case. There was an indication that on the reserve, when respondents returned there that many homes were visited, all were considered to be family though they might not have been included in the interviewees original defintion of their family. At every home there was an expectation that you have

coffee or tea and eat whatever was offered. It was considered an insult to say no. All those interviewed indicated that the family would be unconcerned with family members visiting non-family members and no attempt would be made at interference in such situations.

When asked about changing another family members behavior, all those interviewed indicated a number of common elements, to that process. Typically the change process was felt to take a long time, and be the responsiblity of the one involved in the changing. Each person was unique and had to be respected. If the entire family was concerned about one member, there would be much family discussion about what to do. Someone who was well respected and trusted by the person causing concern might be asked to talk to them and present alternatives that they might consider. The whole family would be involved in supporting the person causing concern both physically and emotionally.

Values

The questions on values inquired about what the interviewee valued and felt to be important to themselves, within their family, and in the Cree culture. As well a series of value statements presented in the literature on Indian people were presented to assess the accuracy of the literature.

What those interviewed value and felt personally to be important varied according to the point that they were at in their lives. The ideas they expressed reflected the personal growth occuring in their lives at the time of the interview.

None of those interviewed could be 'idealistic' about family life. They all felt that communication, frequent contact, harmony, working together were important (though one had raised her daughters to be independent). As well they felt it was important to have disagreements, 'hash them out', and not stay angry. It was the latter area that they felt made it difficult to discuss the 'ideal' family.

The responses to the question about Cree cultural values tended to be general. Respondents felt it was important to learn the old cultural beliefs and values (though they tended not to specify what those were). Respect for each other and respect of our elders / old people were common responses. Harmony with nature was mentioned as an

important value.

The values specified in the literature as being Indian are presented individually here, along with the responses of those interviewed, as to their validity. Explanations for the validity of the values are included.

TIME IS ALWAYS HERE, ONE ONLY NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR THE MOMENT.

All those interviewed felt this was a true statement. Only one person explained. The explanation was that since you never know when death will come there is no need to worry about more than what you are doing.

ONE RECEIVES FROM OTHERS IN ORDER THAT ONE MAY GIVE TO OTHERS.

Two respondents felt this was a true statement. The other did not specify but reworded it to be "you get what you give" eventually it all comes back to you from somewhere".

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE COME ONLY WITH INCREASING AGE, AGE IS A GIFT, TO BE RESPECTED.

Only one respondent felt this statement was true and her explanation contradicted that to some extent as she felt that even as she got older she could not learn enough. The other respondents felt that "you can have old fools too", and that wisdom comes from experience and that wisdom was thus possible in young people.

IT IS REQUIRED THAT ONE BE HELPFUL TO OTHERS IN NEED.

All interviewees felt that this was true. One qualified it by stating that one could sometime be most helpful by not being helpful.

ONE IS ONLY A PART OF NATURE AND AS SUCH HAS NO RIGHT TO CHANGE OR DESTROY NATURE.

All three respondents qualified this statement. In light of technology and progress, they explained how they understood this. The story told by one respondent is representative; In regards to the building of the Slave River Dam, which so many Indian people there protested, an old man said: "When the beaver decides to build a dam he doesn't ask the moose, or the duck, he just builds it. But all the animals use the water from that dam once it is built.".

SPIRITUALISM IS A TOTAL WAY OF LIFE THAT CONFIRMS AND ENHANCES ONESELF AND

OTHERS.

Two of those interviewed believed this to be essential and explained that spiritualism fits into all other aspects of one's life (physical and emotional). The other respondent belived this statement to be false, stating that the individual must have some contol in life. The latter was 14 to 18 years younger than the other two and could thus be considered of a different generation.

IF ONE FAMILY MEMBER DISAGREES WITH THE REST, THEN ALL OTHERS SHOULD RECONSIDER.

There was general agreement with this statement. Though the interviewees felt that if things had been discussed and agreement was not reached then further discussion would not be necessary.

CHILDREN DEVELOP STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY BY VIRTUE OF BEING ACCORDED THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY.

All respondents saw some truth to this statement but qualified it by adding that this started in the home or that it was the community members that the child looked up to that were important. One person felt that role models and behavioral control were essential to children's development. She was the youngest, though her educational training may have also influenced her answer.

There are some disagreements by these Cree people with the values held in the literature to be 'Indian'. There are also some individual differences among them and there may be some generational differences as well.

Counselling

The questions on counselling attempted to assess how the families of those interviewed would seek outside help and for what types of situations. The interviewees were asked what type of problem situations would be kept within the family. They were also asked questions to assess their perceptions of what a helping professional should be like and the knowledge they should possess.

The responses that those interviewed gave did not contradict each other at all and often had common themes. Therefore they have been generally summarized here as a group.

There was reluctance to go outside the family for help with problems. Personal issues would definitely be dealt with in the family, by the one most knowlegable in that area, often an older person. A good friend or someone recommended by and known by a family member would be the person of choice if it was necessary to seek help outside the family.

In order for a helping person to be most helpful a number of characteristics were important. That person must be understanding, genuine, respectful of others and willing to listen and put in a lot of time with the person seeking help. They must be willing to deal with a lot of different issues, and see things from the other person's perspective even though that might be different from from their own beliefs. They must let the person seeking help answer their own questions, so that they can help themselves.

Knowledge of the Cree Indian family characteristics and how they effect individual family members was felt to be important knowledge for a person working with a family to have. This included an appreciation of the support of the family and the detrimental pressures family created. Children are taught that more than one person loves them and they can go to anyone in the family. As well the helper should know the specifics of what the family name meant, where the family was from and who their specific supports included. This might include the personality characteristics of that region of the country. Knowledge of Indian organizations in the city, their services and the support they offer to replace the reserve support system was also felt to be essential. Providing something 'Native' that people can recognize and identify with was important. Encouragement and slowly building a person's development was felt to be critical because too many Indian people have been repeatedly 'knocked down'. Some of the specifics mentioned were knowledge of the values such as sharing, co-operation, respect for the elders; knowledge of how to act in a group of people and what behaviors are acceptable for Cree women. One interviewee stated that Cree people are not so open if you are a stranger but once you are trusted you are in solid whereas the Blackfoot people are always withdrawn. Often people who do not understand the Indian culture and customs can be insulting, which effects the Indian person but nothing would be said regarding feelings by the Indian person.

C. Summary

The group of three individuals interviewed for the pilot study seemed to generate a lot of information. There were individual differences among them but there were also a number of common characteristics.

In the area of family fuctioning there were no particular contradictions to the model used to examine families and it's postulates regarding healthy functioning. Rather the information gathered seemed to supplement, enhance and clarify the model relative to the Cree people. The most outstanding characteristic was the number of different houses included in each individual's definition of family. This influenced all the other dimensions.

There were some common disagreements with the values generally presented as 'Indian'. There were also some individual disagreements among those interviewed. There are a number of possible explanations for these disagreements, such as age, geographic location of early rearing, growth with the overall societal norm, exposure to life in the city, and education. It may be sufficent for the reader to be aware that there are some general value statements made in the literature that are not commonly held by the Cree Indian people, as determined by this small sample.

This group of respondents was very helpful and quite specific at times about the process of counselling or helping Cree Indian people. There clearly is a reluctance to go to strangers for help. What this is related to is not specificly known. Some explainations could include the Cree culture, expectations of any healthy family regarding surviving on their own, those interviewed being themselves in the helping profession, the extent of familial resources being so large, and perhaps other explainations as yet unthought of.

The pilot study pointed out a number of areas in which it was necessary to make changes to the questions of the interview guide. Some of these changes occured in the area of language, others were to more clearly convey the concepts being asked about, still others were to include areas that had been missed. The analysis of the pilot study seemed to indicate, to this author, that there were some inadaquacies in the model of family functioning that was used to generate the questions. It seems that these would occur regardless of the model used. The implications of this study when complete then may not reflect a contradication or confirmation of family functioning relative to the Cree culture but rather may fill in some of the gaps and provide a basis from which the reader may

compare his/her beliefs about healthy families to the norm of the Cree culture as representated by this sample of individuals.